

## What a Wicked Thing to Do (To Let Me Dream of You)

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/33426964) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/33426964>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Explicit</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">No Archive Warnings Apply</a>
Category:	<a href="#">M/M</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">Video Blogging RPF</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">Clay   Dream/GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Clay   Dream &amp; GeorgeNotFound &amp; Sapnap (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Karl Jacobs/Sapnap</a> , <a href="#">Alexis   Quackity &amp; Clay   Dream &amp; GeorgeNotFound &amp; Sapnap &amp; Karl Jacobs</a> , <a href="#">Alexis   Quackity &amp; GeorgeNotFound</a>
Character:	<a href="#">Clay   Dream (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Sapnap (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Patches the Cat (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Karl Jacobs</a> , <a href="#">Alexis   Quackity</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">GeorgeNotFound Visits Florida (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">First Meetings</a> , <a href="#">Third Wheel Sapnap (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Good Cat Patches the Cat (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Implied Sexual Content</a> , <a href="#">Literal Sleeping Together</a> , <a href="#">Platonic Cuddling</a> , <a href="#">idiot used as endearment</a> , <a href="#">Friends to Lovers</a> , <a href="#">Dream has Thalassophobia</a> , <a href="#">Flirting</a> , <a href="#">Underage Drinking</a> , <a href="#">Flustered GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Mutual Pining</a> , <a href="#">Hurt/Comfort</a> , <a href="#">Platonic love confessions</a> , <a href="#">Slow Burn</a> , <a href="#">Non-Sexual Intimacy</a> , <a href="#">Unresolved Sexual Tension</a> , <a href="#">Platonic Kissing</a> , <a href="#">accidental face reveal kinda</a> , <a href="#">Denial of Feelings</a> , <a href="#">GeorgeNotFound is So Whipped (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">GeorgeNotFound is Bad at Feelings (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Possessive Clay   Dream (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Sharing Clothes</a> , <a href="#">Crew Boys Meetup</a> , <a href="#">Insecure Clay   Dream (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Clay   Dream is Bad at Feelings (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">They're a mess</a> , <a href="#">Smut</a> , <a href="#">Masturbation</a> , <a href="#">Blow Jobs</a> , <a href="#">Grinding</a> , <a href="#">Praise Kink</a> , <a href="#">Explicit Consent</a> , <a href="#">Top Clay   Dream (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Bottom GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Hair-pulling</a> , <a href="#">Anxious GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Lack of Communication</a> , <a href="#">Resolved Sexual Tension</a> , <a href="#">Porn with Feelings</a> , <a href="#">Angst</a> , <a href="#">Domestic Fluff</a> , <a href="#">Falling In Love</a> , <a href="#">Love Confessions</a> , <a href="#">Happy Ending</a>
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2021-08-23 Completed: 2022-02-07 Chapters: 20/20 Words: 72369

## What a Wicked Thing to Do (To Let Me Dream of You)

by [snakeinaboyband](#)

### Summary

George finds himself often brushing his fingers over those freckles until he realizes what he's doing and withdraws entirely. He kind of wants to shove as much distance between them as possible so he can reject the thought that he's falling.

But he also doesn't want that, admittedly. The soothing of everything in their busy lives at the placement of being tucked into his friend's chest, it's just too good. And if he did want to place a platonic wedge into their closeness, there'd have to be a conversation held.

Because Dream is guilty of pressing close just as much as he is, he can't one day go stiff at hands pulling at him. He can't go back to sleeping alone.

## Notes

This entire thing, especially the first little part, is based on those songs getting tweeted out that Dream listening to. And it was initially just gonna be the first part but it seemed too short. So I guess this is just gonna be a multi-chapter thing because I'm a weak weak man that never lets ideas go.

Anyway, enjoy! :)

(Also! Title from Wicked Game by Chris Isaak)

# Chapter 1

George had seen it. He knows. There's an outcry about it, he's getting tagged, there are comments. Some joke that wow, he must be in Florida then. He's not. Instead, he's in London feeling numb with the knowledge that across the world, at this very moment, Dream is having sex.

There's no other explanation and they all know it, the choices of songs don't lie. He knows because Dream's not online, not editing to music, they'd be on call if he was. And George's message from hours ago remains unread. He hates it.

He sits at his desk, curled up in his chair, rubbing his eyes like it'll relieve some of the weird feelings. It's not like he didn't know, not like he thought that Dream had never before and never would. But for it to be blatantly apparent so publicly like this?

He wants to be sick. It's getting shoved in his face, *haha you can't have him*. And it leaves a bitter taste in his mouth, he half wants to message Dream that his Spotify is public and interrupt him. But no, he's not going to be selfish about it.

He never really took his friend to be the type to listen to music, he's always been so gentle, he figured he'd be the type to talk. To mumble sweet nothings. But maybe that's just George's fantasies conforming to his personal preference. A part of himself still latches onto the idea anyway.

Who even is he with then, just someone random person? A partner? No, he'd tell him if he had a partner. He hopes so, at least. The fact that the idea of Dream having casual sex feels odd to him really shows that he's thought too much about it. He burns with some guilt over that, latching onto ideas that aren't his to explore.

He feels pathetic just sitting here, watching each song getting tweeted. What is he even waiting for? He gets up instead to sit in the shower, leaving his phone on his desk so he can deny what's happening. He just wants to scrub all the jealousy off his skin until it's unnoticeable. Or at least where it twists his guts but doesn't fall into his voice.

He wishes he was in Florida. Honestly. Even if he was just sitting in his room there and watching the same thing happen. On second thought, maybe he wouldn't want to be there for this one moment, he doesn't think he could look him in the eye. He dreads this inevitably happening when he lives there.

His sulking will be so noticeable then, mouth too dry to get out anything that'd sway the observation. Well, he reasons, at least he could sit with Sapnap. He stays under the burning hot water with his eyes closed, taking deep breaths and steadying himself.

It's alright for him to be upset about this, just not to burden Dream with it. Because it's *his* thing, nobody else's. He'll wait until the other calls and then do whatever he wants to deal with all this, he'd been roped into it by the fans without even meaning to be. Why should there be a statement? "No, I didn't have sex." is not very convincing.

The thought of Dream tweeting that out makes him smile, which makes him feel better. He gets out with pink skin, not bothering to brush his hair and he sits unceremoniously back into his chair. But this time he doesn't reach for his phone, logging onto the SMP instead.

He doesn't know what he wants to do, really. Just distract himself, he puts on his own music and

wanders around. He doesn't want to talk to anyone on call currently, it's going to be brought up because news travels fast. He doesn't want to talk about it, not to anyone.

He trails after Ranboo for a bit, figuring he's streaming by the way he stops randomly. He presses shift to do a little dance behind him, sure the chat is going crazy. He leaves before he can be asked to join the vc though, not particularly wanting to look at his Discord.

He should, he knows he should, especially with what's happening. And he's noticeably online so it's obvious he's ignoring it, which raises concern. A good song comes on and he closes his eyes, listening to it and wishing he wasn't such an idiot about his best friend.

A chime through the music interrupts the moment, *speaking of the devil*. A message asking if he wants to call, he rubs a hand over his face. He's not ready, he leaves the game and stands, opting to pace instead. Just a few paces across the length of the room, his mouth feels dry. Another chime, he seeks a glass for some water.

Cat rubs on his leg, attempting to calm his nerves. He gives her one soft pat for her efforts, heading back to his computer. Many more messages from Dream await him, he scoffs in fondness over the annoying behavior. Then he calls, just one chime before the other is picking up, "Hey."

It's casual, light. Fuck, the remembrance that this man recently was- No, none of that on call. He takes a breath, "Hey."

"Is something wrong? You were ignoring me."

Damn. Of course he noticed, George always jumps on call with him instantly. He runs a nervous hand through his tangled hair, stating simply, "I was distracted. Your Spotify was public, you know."

"Oh." It's stated in that blank, surprised tone. Then instantly, because he's the most annoyingly considerate person, he says, "Fuck, I'm sorry George. You're probably getting a ton of shit online right now."

"It's fine." It's not. The two words come out clipped and he forces himself to calm again, "You just want to never say anything?"

"Yes," It's said more breathily now and George squeezes his eyes shut.

---

Florida is.. Hot. Almost unbearably so under his mask and with his foolish decision to wear a hoodie. But he's here, sweating and overheating but here nonetheless. And he's going to meet his idiot best friends in ten minutes.

He just makes sure he gets the hoodie off before they see him to save himself some embarrassment. He feels gross from the flight and the layer of sweat forming over his skin. In a perfect world, he wouldn't look like a total mess.

Still, when Sapnap sees him first, he's crushed in a bruising hug. And he's warm and overwhelmed by the heat but the laugh that leaves his mouth is still loud. He'd been snuck up on, maybe a bit disappointed that he hadn't spotted them first.

Strong arms squeeze him much too tightly around the waist. At first, George steadies a tight grip on his shoulders to stop them from toppling over, then he gets a proper hold on him. The younger is already babbling in his ear about something, he tunes it out when his sight lands on Dream.

He's much more awkward, waiting for his chance for a greeting, he just knows he's grinning. He's got a hat on and sunglasses to disguise himself, George can't get a good look at him with the mask he's also got on. Sapnap pulls away, extending him at arm's length and looking him over, grinning wildly, "Sorry, I had to get my hug in before you guys are all over each other."

A flustered laugh leaves his mouth, cheeks going pink. But it's Dream's turn for a hug, something promised for years. He's gentler, leaning down, tugging him into his chest almost hesitantly. None of that, not for their first hug, George latches onto him tightly.

That releases all the uncertainty from Dream's hold, arms instantly tightening, comforting around his waist. George wishes he could see him, wishes he could tuck his face into his neck, wishes he'd never let go. Instead, he pulls away, smiling up at him. A soft hand runs over his skin, right under his eye, fond, "Hey."

Putting a face, or at least a person, to the voice is so odd. It's a different vibe from what he got from Sapnap, something more tender there. George squints at him, seeing himself in the reflection of the sunglasses, joking, "Don't talk to me until I can actually see your face, stranger."

A familiar soft laugh and Sapnap slings an arm over his shoulders, cheerfully saying, "C'mon, let's go home."

The drive is filled with random banter between his two friends, he feels too warm and tired to contribute anything. He simply presses his forehead against the window and thanks whatever god above for the invention of AC, eyes closing. He doesn't even realize he's drifted off until he's being shaken gently by the Floridian in the driver's seat next to him.

He gets a little apologetic tilt of his head for waking him, fond words, "We're here. I figured I shouldn't carry you inside before you've seen my face."

And there's a tremble in the freckled hand on his arm, George hadn't considered that Dream would be nervous. Yeah, they've talked about it a bit, he was aware of some of the insecurity the other has. But not like this, not shaky-hand worthy worry. He smiles, rubbing his eye tiredly, trying to come off as reassuring.

It's not like he's judgemental about it, or that he really cares. He likes Dream more than he knows, despite never seeing his face. How can he not be wooed by his wheezing laugh and the times his voice goes all soft? The moment is interrupted by Sapnap opening his door impatiently, being forced to get out by whiny complaints.

The house is big, subtle in its greyed color. But something about it is so *Dream*, he likes it immediately. He's honestly nervous about settling in, wondering when the place will start feeling like home and where he fits in the other two's dynamic. When Patches will start liking him.

He has the distraction of getting his suitcases out of the trunk for now, it keeps him steady. But too soon the wooden front door is being unlocked, greeted by white walls. It's honestly.. exactly what he expected from the two.

Decorated just enough to prove it's occupied but not so much so that it's convincing they're out of their rooms often. He briefly wonders what he'll get to contribute to the house. But a jingle of a collar alerts him, calico cat stopped in her rush to greet her owners.

She seems wary of him, some unrecognized face among the two she knows. She peers from him to Dream, seemingly not knowing him when he's all covered up. Patches stands tense, frozen, eyes wide and alert.

But she allows Sapnap to coo and pick her up, legs suspended in the same straight position in her tension. George extends his hand, hoping so much that she'll respond positively. Patches takes in the scent before appearing to be indifferent, butting her head against Sapnap's shoulder lovingly.

Then George's elbow is pulled gently, Dream's voice sounding next to him, "Let's go put your stuff in your room."

He follows along behind the taller, studying his broad shoulders and the way his shirt hangs off him. Rooms are getting named off, he tries desperately to pay attention. His room is downstairs with Sapnap's, Dream's upstairs as well as the office.

Blue. His room walls are blue. He smiles because it's dumb but it's his color, he wonders if they repainted it or if it's just a coincidence. He gets a little flourish of his friend's hand once the door is open, he pauses to look up at him.

His reflection greets him in the sunglasses that are still on. Dream's stalling the inevitable wordlessly, he tilts his head again in that comforting way George is already getting used to. Then he reaches with careful hands up, pulling off the dumb glasses that are preventing eye contact.

Those promised green eyes greet him, they look kind in that way that makes George's stomach flip. There are many things behind his eyes. Warmth, fear, fondness. Love.

Freckles dust the bridge of his nose faintly where he can see, under his eyes lightly as well. George grins, hands seeking the hat next. The mask is last, it's what covers most of his face. Blonde hair is messy, obviously overgrown but in a way that looks somewhat intentional.

Dream's smile wrinkles the corners of his eyes and it takes everything in George's power not to blurt out that he's beautiful. The younger hums, the tilt of his head revealed to be accompanied by the slight raise of his eyebrows, "What are you doing, a slow face reveal?"

He snickers softly, eyes still running over the sight he can see, "Yeah. What, did you want to just rip it all off at once?"

"I don't know," It's mumbled back quietly. Then George reaches for the mask, fingertips barely grazing over his skin when he grabs it. He gets the faintest accidental brush of his fingers over Dream's lips under the mask, sending shivers up his spine pleasantly.

Then he pulls it off, Dream's eyes already searching his face for a reaction. He's got many light freckles all over the skin that's revealed, pink chapped lips, straight nose. He imagined his features to be sharper but there's a softened feel that makes him fill with warmth.

The tilt of the head, it sharpens one side of his previously soft jaw, "So?"

And to see his mouth curve around the word, to really wrap his mind around that this is Dream. George breathes out easily, "Handsome. You're really handsome."

He gets to see him grin for the first time widely, it's slightly crooked but just right, "You sure?"

George's hands instantly seek the dimples that are revealed, brushing over the warmth of his cheeks, "And you were worried? Not that I care but holy fuck, Dream."

The younger leans into the touch, making him move instead to cradle his face with his hands. It smushes his cheeks between his palms a bit, tenderness leaks into both their expressions.

He's pulled back into those safe arms and firm chest, waist being squeezed slightly. George

presses his face into Dream's collarbones, feather-light kiss pressed into his hair. It sends sparks through his entire body, "I'm really glad you're here, George."

"This is so weird," He pulls back to take in his face again, "I can't believe I'm here and you're *you* and I'm in your *house*. I'm in Florida."

"I know." An unsure hand brushes fingertips over his jaw. Then Dream clears his throat and steps away properly, lips pressed together, "You should probably get settled in, sleep a little more."

"No way, I just got here, I'm not ready to sleep yet."

"Then.. Then at least get comfortable and we can watch a movie or something."

George nods his agreement and he's being left alone, ears following the soft footsteps making their way back down the hall. He closes his door and sits on his bed for a second to process.

Right so.. He's in Florida. And it's extremely hot here and *Dream* is extremely hot, Sapnap gives warm hugs, Patches doesn't hate him, his room is blue. He's tired. He wants to shower.

His suitcases have been discarded by his door, he rises on legs that suddenly feel weak. His mind is circulating with *Dream, Dream, Dream*. Honestly, what did he expect? He knew that he's been swooning over him for a while and that it'd get worse in person. But *damn*.

He works to grab comfortable clothes, going over where all the rooms are so he remembers better. He doesn't know upstairs, he wonders which one is Dream's room. His mind accuses him by asking if there's even a reason he would need to know. He weakly defends that there probably is.

He remembers where the bathroom is, securing the door shut behind him, muffled voices coming from the living room. His mind focuses on them, he's not used to living with other people. Or being around other people much in general, really.

The shower shuts them out, it takes him only a second to figure it out. At least he won't feel gross anymore, planning on brushing his hair out and a new outfit. It's similar to the one he's got on, sweatpants and a big shirt.

Air hitting his bare skin makes him realize how cold it is in the house. As he steps under the warm water he wonders if they keep it cold because they get hot easily, they always complained about that over call.

The grossness of travel and sweat gets washed off, he finally stands up straight as he stretches to make the tightness leave his shoulders. He'd brought his own shampoo into the bathroom with him but he still peers at the bottle that's in there.

It's Sapnap's, they're sharing this bathroom. He reaches for it instead of his own, it's not like anyone would know. It's a more flowery scent than he expects, it's oddly comforting, it fills the bathroom pleasantly as he works it through his hair.

He sighs happily as the water that's nearly burning hot loosens the tension in his muscles. The first meeting is always the most stressful, everything should be easy from now on. He saw Dream's face, it went fine, he got a hug from Sapnap. They still love him, even in person.

That soothes him immensely. And now they're going to watch a movie, the entire Dream Team on one couch. He lets the water run over his head, soaked in that pleasant floral smell. He turns off the shower, clean after previously lathering on his own body wash, shivering in the cold.

He grasps the lush towel that had already been laid out for him, pressing his face into it. He dries quickly, maybe a bit damp in his rush to put on clothes, trying to warm up. His hair is in his eyes, he brushes it to the side with a huff of annoyance, trying to get it to stay out of his line of sight.

Patches is in the hallway when he opens the door, on the wall opposite where he's standing, peering up at him with big eyes. He gives her a soft click of his tongue, passing with an understanding lack of intention to pick her up.

A jingle signals she's moving elsewhere behind him, he pays no mind, stubborn in his wish to portray that he's not interested in harming her. He nearly jumps out of his skin at a soft brush on his ankle, bent as he's closing up his suitcase.

Eyes dilated with fear from his reaction stare back at him, both of them frozen in surprise. He looks to his door to see it cracked, she must've pushed it open after him. He relaxes, looking at her apologetically, talking softly, "I'm sorry, you scared me. It's okay."

Her nose twitches and he extends his hand as a peace offering. Another unsure gaze shared between them before she allows him to pet her, rubbing on his ankle again. He only pets her a few times, wary of being too much, before he hums for her to follow.

She seems to understand, trailing after him down the hallway and into the living room. His friends are talking about something. Or arguing, he thinks. They seem to do that a lot, in a weirdly comfortable way. They seem to be very into it, waving their hands about with their points, George can't even decipher what is even going on.

There's a rub against his leg again, feline having caught up, looking at him in question for his stillness. He tilts his head towards the two in answer, as if saying *these idiots, amirite?* Patches meows back in response, catching the attention of the two other men.

Sapnap's eyes instantly light up, "You're making friends?"

Dream simply slumps back into the couch, disappointed in whatever they were talking about, eyeing them, "We ordered pizza, hope that's fine."

He nods without a word, coming to perch on the cushion between them. The cat settles on Dream's lap instead, much to his disappointment. At least they've bonded a little bit now, it's progress.



## Chapter 2

Their choice of movie is some action movie that Sapnap seems overly hyped for, George is kind of distracted. Dream is running his hand absentmindedly over the cat and those thick fingers and green veins spidering through his wrist are catching his eye. Plus he's cold, so so cold.

His fingers feel almost numb with it, he distracts from the feeling by rolling the material of his shirt between fingertips. He tucks his legs under himself in an attempt to warm himself further, goosebumps spreading over his bare arms as he shivers.

His damp hair doesn't help either, still a bit wet despite the time they've spent eating and now starting the movie. He's broken out of his cycle of looking between Dream's hands, his own hands, and the tv by Sapnap standing. His gaze trails after him and watches him disappear down the hallway.

The armful of blankets he returns with makes George's heart jump in his throat. He's practically pleading wordlessly for one, the youngest gives him a little smile before covering him. It's so carefully laid over him, over his shoulders so it covers his arms as well. He thanks the action with a quiet hum, sinking down into the couch to snuggle into it properly.

The one given to Dream is simply tossed at him, startling Patches and making her run off. It hits him in the face and ruffles his hair up endearingly, George's eyes trace over the sight. He expects a sharp comment but none comes, perhaps this is a regular occurrence?

He wants to know regular occurrences, wants to know how they all fit together. He's the odd one out, the one with no routine involving the others. And he feels it especially in tiny moments like this, he craves the time when he's got a normal involving the other two.

He's been staring too long, green eyes meeting his, he offers a little coy smile. The changing of colors on the screen casts those softened features in varying light, he studies the sight with interest in the freckles. He wants to brush his fingers over the bridge of his nose and trace them all the way down to the ones hidden under his shirt.

His brown eyes instantly widen and jump away from where they'd been lingering over collarbones. Right. Platonic thoughts only, he trains his eyes intently on the tv. Some intense interrogation scene with a sharp-featured man and a woman in a blazer that looks uncomfortable.

He almost wants to complain about that, that the man gets to look all rugged while this gorgeous woman is stuck with brunette hair tied back and minimal makeup. If he were alone he'd look up the actor just to see what she looks like when more comfortably dressed. Is she stuck in this in other roles too?

He catches that he's going on a mini tangent about it, anything is probably better than looking at the blonde next to him. Speaking of which, he's being nudged and asked quietly, "What are you thinking about?"

And he'd had to lean close to speak quietly so as not to disturb Sapnap. George looks over, their faces closer than he expected, making pink blossom on his cheeks. He chokes out a confused, "What?"

Dream smiles, eyes tracing over his face in a way that feels fond, "You were scrunching up your nose all cute like you do when annoyed."

“Oh.” He’s stunned for a second, *cute?* Then he brushes it off because it isn’t the first time, admitting quietly back, “I was pissed for that actor, her clothes were the worst, they looked uncomfortable.”

The younger man hums like he hadn’t really thought of that, green eyes hitting the light pleasantly as he looks back at the screen. They’re still close, there’s a little pause before a shoulder nudges his, “Yeah, you’re right, they do.”

George’s shoulder is hit much harder on his other side, making his head snap towards Sapnap in annoyance. The youngest only complains, “Quit excluding me to flirt. I get dibs on cuddling, right George?”

An arm wraps around his shoulders then, tugging him into a warm chest and sending sparks off in his chest, honeyed voice, “No way, I obviously get to cuddle him first.”

It takes him a second to blink away his blinding gay panic before he manages to get out, “What? I wasn’t aware that was a requirement.”

“It’s not,” Sapnap waves his hand dismissively, eyes lingering on the secure hand resting on the oldest man’s bicep, “Dream just never cuddles me, which means it’s you and me, Gogy.”

He makes a face but remembers that he’s going to be stuck alone in his empty room all night, compromising, “Only if your room isn’t gross.”

“A sleepover too?”

Which is a joke but both of them grin, he nods. Dream huffs and his breath hits George’s skin, making him sink unconsciously further against his chest, “That’s no fair, why does he get you the first night?”

“He asked nicely.” He’s growing used to the weight over his shoulders now, shifting to peer up at the other, adding, “Plus, you’re lame.”

Sapnap adds, “Yeah, you never wanna cuddle with me, that’s not fair. This is bullshit favoritism.”

George gives the youngest a pleased little smile, cheeks pink with the knowledge that he’s correct, he pats his shoulder sympathetically, “We can just exclude Dream, we’ll even steal Patches.”

“Yeah, she likes me more anyways.”

“That is *not* true-”

Before yet another argument can start, he holds up his hands as if to stop them, “It doesn’t matter because ultimately *I’m* going to be her favorite person.”

Which does effectively shut them up, he hums at the lack of protest. There’s no arguing probably because he can simply decide to sleep in his own room if he wants. He doesn’t want that but the other two don’t know that.

Sapnap has to rewind the movie to catch what he missed, grumbling to himself as he does so. Tanned hands come to tug on George’s blanket, adjusting to make sure he’s covered, probably able to feel the iciness of his skin now. But then the arm is back around his shoulders, uncertain gaze given to him that he answers with a nod of permission.

He dozes off again, he thinks. Sometime during a fighting scene he wasn’t too interested in,

possibly. There's no memory of even closing his eyes, just the vague feeling of warmth along one side of his body and cotton against his cheek.

But he feels safe with the subconscious knowledge of someone else's presence, it probably helps that it's his two favorite people. He's somewhat aware of soft voices, the sound of the movie, the rise and fall underneath him.

He hates that he's awakened from his peace by a light touch, humming and furrowing his eyebrows in denial of it. But Dream's voice is quiet right near his ear, strained with the effort of whispering, "C'mon, let's get you to bed, Georgie."

Sapnap's much louder voice sounds behind him, "Yeah, into *my* bed."

The oldest finally moves to stand, uncertain hands on his waist to steady him as he goes, still wobbly with sleep. But he makes it, into his room and into his pajamas, heading for Sapnap's room tiredly.

He's been lied to, the room is not actually that clean. It's mostly just clothes thrown everywhere. He doesn't care, the bed is free, he's slept in worse places he's sure. He collapses onto it, paying no mind to the shorter who's protesting his entrance by saying that he was still changing.

It's not like George looked at him anyway, he huffs with annoyance. He's still getting the covers put over him gently, letting his friend have the side against the wall. It's not like Sapnap glues himself to his side immediately, it's more the idea of sharing a bed he guesses.

George still turns his head and ruffles fingers through short brunette hair, offering a little smile. He gets one in return, making him work to speak with a sigh, "I'm glad I'm here."

An arm snakes its way around his waist, "Me too, Gogy."

And he does sleep for a bit, maybe an hour or two. He wakes because he's so cold, Sapnap having separated from him completely in his sleep. The ceiling provides no shapes, no guidance for late-night thoughts that will put him back to sleep.

He slips out of the covers to seek a glass of water or his phone or something that will help. He laughs a bit to himself about the fact that he has zero idea where the glasses are, opening cabinet after cabinet only to guess incorrectly and close them as quietly as possible.

It works out, the faucet sounds too loud in the silence of the house. Is his phone in his room? He doesn't know where he put it while changing in sleep-induced haze. He only drinks half his glass before his ears pick up on a very very faint voice from upstairs.

He seeks it instantly without thought, abandoning his water to climb the stairs with silent socked feet. There's only one door with light peeking through the bottom, at the very end of the hall. It's dark and he hopes that Patches isn't laying anywhere he can't see. He makes it fine but his breath gets caught in his throat once he's in front of Dream's room.

Should he? Maybe he wasn't shown around upstairs because he's unwelcome there, is he intruding? It *is* the dead of the night and he *is* standing like a creep in front of his best friend's door in the dark. He shakes his head at himself, knocking softly and half hoping that it'll go unheard.

It doesn't, he's greeted with blonde hair now considerably more messy and baggy hoodie and tired eyes. Dream tilts his head, eyebrows furrowed, voice smooth, "Hey. Was I being too loud?"

"No," He manages to croak out, amazed that anyone could look that good while that tired, "I

couldn't sleep, was cold. What are you doing?"

"Sap didn't keep you warm?" Dream steps to the side in obvious invitation to enter but George stays uncertainly where he is, "I'm just talking with, um, Bad, Quackity, and Karl. They're excited that you're here."

George squints up at him, "Aren't you tired?"

"I'm just," Eyes dart everywhere to look for an explanation, the answer coming out blankly, "I don't know. Couldn't really sleep either."

"Oh." They just look at each other for a second and the older takes note of the way the tiredness fully leaks into the other's gaze, no longer held back. He tilts his head, asking, "Can I come in?"

Dream rolls his eyes, "Yeah, idiot." A fleeting hand brushes over the small of his back when he passes, eyes instantly drawn to the monitors showing Discord. A click of the door behind him, "You want to say hi?"

"I'm tired." It's said blankly, he doesn't even look towards the other. There's a lot of things that absolutely endear him about his friend, seeing some fanmade things and how nothing matches. He huffs in amusement but he didn't expect anything different honestly, what mostly shocks him is the cream color of the comforter on his bed.

It's so.. He doesn't know, suburban mom feeling. The curtains that are drawn over the windows are green, a nice forest green. At least Dream has the sense to not make his room neon green, he's not *that* committed to his brand. It's comfy, it feels comfy, it feels like Dream. It makes sense.

It's murmured quietly, "You want to lay down?"

He nods, throat tight, heading right for the bed to hopefully sink under the blankets that seem much thicker. Patches is revealed to be among them, head rising from where it'd rested to look at him. He scratches gentle fingertips behind her ears, half tuning out Dream's voice.

Whatever he's saying isn't directed to him anyway, it's meant for those he's on call with. The blankets are soft on his skin, he understands why the feline chose to lay on them. George turns his head slightly, commenting, "You don't put a side of the bed against the wall. What are you, a psychopath?"

It earns him a hoarse laugh, his gaze instantly jumps up at the feel of the bed dipping next to him. The computer has been turned off now, call ended. Just the two of them. Alone. Dream sprawls out tiredly on the bed, eyelids already drooping.

George pushes at his side, careful not to disturb Patches, "No, no, move before you fall asleep or else I'll have nowhere to lay."

He gets a weak little smile in response, he just wants to kiss that stupid sleepy look off his stupid face. It almost hurts to be unable to. He gets them settled, pulling covers over the younger and turning off the light. He almost falls on his journey back but makes it with a little scoff from Dream.

The blankets are indeed warmer, he's wary of the cat but unable to see her through the dark. He shivers, so close to his friend, despite sleeping against him only hours prior. A warm hand lands on his hip, making him instantly go back into that giddy panicking state, "Can I-"

George grasps his wrist with cold fingers, "Just hold me, idiot."

He turns so he can be pulled in, heavy arm moving to drape over him. It's comfortable, his mind screams at him that this feels too right. He shoves his dumb thoughts away and snuggles back to steal his friend's body heat.

## Chapter 3

George wakes up due to light streaming in from the window, still laid out under that thick off-white comforter. He's sprawled out on his stomach, reaching in sleep for the empty side of the bed. He scans the room to find that he's alone, shifting to see what's the cause of the warmth on his hip.

Patches stares back at him lazily, curled close. He brushes a hand over her back, asking weakly, "Where is he?"

Because he kind of aches with the fact that he'd woken up alone, he wanted to wake to those warm arms. He hadn't been cold after he sought his other friend, at least. He probably looked like a mess last night from sleep, he's surprised he wasn't turned away.

He pushes himself up and to his feet, gesturing to the calico, "C'mon." He picks her up warily when she makes no attempt to follow, she's relaxed and warm in his arms. She situates herself over his shoulder automatically, he simply supports her.

He's careful making his way down the stairs, not wanting to fall, heading for the voices in the kitchen. They halt when he arrives, two sets of green eyes trained on him. Then Sapnap's eyes sharpen playfully, he complains, "You two really are on your dnf arch."

George makes his way to lean back on the counter next to Dream, who pets Patches, "You didn't even cuddle me, I was too cold to sleep and Dream was up so."

The blonde chimes, "Remind me to put extra blankets in your room."

The youngest is still caught up on the other thing, accusing gaze turning more serious as he looks to the other, "You were still up?"

He shrugs but looks guilty, "I was too restless to sleep, the guys wanted to know all about George being here so I was doing that."

"You need to start getting more sleep, dude."

"I know," his voice quiet now.

George attempts to get the look off Dream's face, "At least you slept a little bit while I was there."

"You helped," His kind eyes hit the morning light that streams through the kitchen window, trained on him with some odd look behind them. They rest there for a second, "We were just going to make pancakes, you hungry?"

He makes a noncommitted noise, never hungry after just waking up, "I guess."

He ends up not eating, still sitting and giggling along with the other two about nothing. They're all just enjoying each other's company, adjusting into a more comfortable dynamic and conversation as time progresses.

Well, he eats one bite because the other two demand that he's got to at least taste it. He takes the bite with Dream's fork because he deems him the less gross of the two, making sure that fact is known. Sapnap makes another dnf joke in response.

Afterward he gets a very sticky kiss on the cheek from the youngest, making him scrunch up his

nose in disgust, Sapnap chiming, “We were thinking we could go to the beach today if you’re up for it.”

George nearly jumps at the sudden wet washcloth being swiped across his cheek, Dream having been washing off the stickiness on his own hands. He goes on to wipe the counter, humming, “If you’re too tired, it’s fine.”

And his mind is too caught up in everything that just happened, the instant motion that had made Dream feel like a mother wordlessly scolding her child. He’s a bit stuck in it, eyes trailing after the flex of his arms as he cleans. Then he clears his throat, “Yeah. I’m not too tired, sounds fun.”

And those last two words feel out of character to even himself, blandly falling from his lips. His cheeks color pink in embarrassment. Sapnap cheers and Dream’s lazy gaze goes from him to the clock on the microwave, “We can leave at.. noon?”

Which is a few hours, he nods before he’s being dragged away. Sapnap’s hold on him is tight and once he’s in the hallway he mumbles, “Could you *be* any more obvious, George?”

“What?” Because no fucking way he’s been found out this fast.

He’s being mocked, “Oh *Dream* I helped you sleep, you’re not gross, I like checking you out every other minute. *George*, come on.”

He has been found out this fast. Dammit. He winces at those words, they’re safely closed into Sapnap’s room now. He tries to play dumb, “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“I figured,” A humorless laugh, “I figured I’d have a little bit of time before you two started.”

George’s eyes narrow, “What?”

“You ditched me for Dream. Already.”

“Is that what you’re upset about?” He frowns, “I told you that I couldn’t sleep, I didn’t do it on purpose. Now I know to just suffer, I guess.”

“Why does it feel like you already have a better place here than me?”

“Sap.” Instantly the anger is gone, he slides tight arms around the other’s shoulders, stating firmly, “I don’t. Ever since I’ve gotten here I’ve been thinking that you two have settled together so nicely. I’ve been feeling like the odd one out.”

“Yeah, but-“

“And I didn’t ditch you for Dream. I’m not going to. It’s the three of us, okay? I’ve just barely gotten here, of course it’s going to be weird for a bit. But we’ve just got to find our normal, right?”

“Yeah. Right.”

“Now,” He pulls away to look at the other and smiles, “Let’s get ready for the beach. We’ll make fun of Dream for being a wimp about the ocean, yeah?”

“He never goes in.”

“Looks like we’ll have to change that then.”

And it does seem like he’s made Sapnap feel better. There’s a sudden tight hold on his biceps,

smile curling up his lips, voice lowered, “And I wouldn’t really mind, you know. You and him, I mean. As long as that means I’m not excluded.”

George’s face instantly warms, he stammers, “I, uh. Yeah, I don’t see where you’re getting that idea from.”

He gets an eye roll in response, “You think he’s hot.”

“*Florida* is hot.”

“Yeah, because Dream is in it.”

He shakes his head, smile weak, “You’re so annoying.”

“I notice it about you two. Everyone does, even fans. A tip? Don’t be a fucking idiot about it.”

He’s shaken just once like those words are being stabilized properly into the list of things he needs to think about. He goes back to his room in a bit of a daze, closing the door behind him and sinking down against it.

Right. So Sapnap knows. Everyone knows. But do they know realistically or is it an exaggerated form of the very tiny moments they have? He’s not sure. He decides he’s not going to care, that he’s going to throw away every dangerous feeling like he has been for a while. That seems like the safest route.

He rubs freezing hands over his face, trying to wipe away all the sickness swirling in his stomach. He’s just going to do better today, make sure Sapnap isn’t excluded even a tiny bit. Because he feels kinda shitty that he’s made him feel that way despite only being here a full day.

24 hours and he’s already fucking things up. He spends the next few hours tucked away in his room and trying to get himself together before the rest of the day is spent around the others. Living with people is difficult, he’d forgotten that.

His swim trunks are blue, a navy blue he thinks, and.. black? Either way, they fit around his skinny waist and don’t fall off so he couldn’t care less about the color. He pulls on a shirt too, wary of the sun, sure that the other two have sunscreen he can put on. He burns too easily, he swears.

He’s fine, he’s composed, safely tucked into that part of his mind that prevents him from doing anything stupid. It’s kind of all thrown out the window at hollow knocks on his door and the inevitably attractive blonde in the hallway when he answers.

Dream’s got a thin white shirt on, perched against his door frame while ruffling his hair like he’s self-conscious about it. He seems distracted too, green eyes unfocused elsewhere before they sharpen, “Ready to go?”

George only manages a hum, more occupied with appearing that he’s not totally gawking at the sight. Oh to be able to taste the freckled skin over his pulse point. He blinks, eyes jumping back to emerald ones still trained on him expectantly, “Yeah.”

“You okay? You seem off.” The hand tilting his chin up more so they make proper eye contact sends him into that state of panic again. He’s a bit blinded with it, lips sealed shut so he doesn’t stutter over his thoughts.

Then he steadies himself by letting his fingertips brush softly over the other’s wrist, acknowledging the hold with his touch, “Yeah, I’m okay Dream.”



“Okay.” George had never realized how analyzing his gaze is until now, sharp as he takes notes. Dream exhales softly, letting go to lean back on the door frame and train his attention elsewhere, “Was it.. Okay? That you slept with me. And Sap. You don’t do that.”

*I was upset that you weren’t there when I woke up.* He smiles bitterly to himself, looking down at the carpet, “Yeah, it was fine, I think I’d rather have done that than slept alone. There’s always that weird feeling that comes with change, you know? Didn’t wanna be alone.”

Which is his best way of saying *I feel entirely comfortable when with you.* But he’s not good about saying things like that directly. Dream gets it anyway, he always does, smiling a little, “You’ve got to sleep in your room eventually, George.”

The way his lips curve around his name sends tingles through his body. He rolls his eyes, “Yeah, if one of you guys sleeps in here with me.”

“My room is so much better though.”

George agrees but denies it anyway, “Definitely not with your *mom* sheets.”

“Mom sheets? *What?*” Dream looks exasperated, “Don’t be bitter because you know it’s more comfortable than yours.”

“I don’t even know what mine feels like yet.”

“Get in them then. Right now and tell me they’re not as comfortable.”

And the tone makes George’s heart jolt in his chest, his cheeks go pink instantly. He’s never heard him be stern in person before, he turns stubbornly and does as told. Admittedly they’re not as soft, he sprawls out under them and bluffs, “I don’t know..”

He gets a scoff, Dream coming over to splay a hand out over the sheets, glaring halfheartedly down at him, “You’re such a fucking liar.”

“This is a dumb argument,” He points out.

The taller man rolls his eyes and looks to the door, wondering aloud, “What’s taking Sapnap so long?”

George studies the curve of his jaw, wishing to place his lips there, “I dunno.”

“He’s left us all alone.”

And the older man instantly giggles, tongue caught between his front teeth, “You’re such a creep.”

“Get your mind out of the gutter, Georgie.” He makes a soft hum before moving to collapse onto the other side of the bed, over the covers. Pretty blonde hair falls around his head like a halo, lit up in the overhead lights of his room.

He turns to study his side profile only for him to hum in question and turn his head toward him with curious doe eyes. He wishes he’d smile and let him rub gentle fingers over his dimples as he did impulsively when he first saw him. Instead, he asks, “Are you going into the ocean today?”

George feels odd with those analytical eyes running over his every feature, waiting as Dream considers. He’s got a known fear of the ocean, probably meaning to sit up on the beach all day. It’d be fine if he didn’t swim, there’s still Sapnap that’s going to go in. He shrugs lazily, rubbing at his

eyes, “Maybe.”

“It’s my first time going to the beach in forever. First time in Florida.” He states it but it’s obviously not a plea, he’d understand if the other chooses to stay out of the water. Dream stays silent and he can practically hear the gears turning in his head, he offers jokingly, “I’ll hold your hand?”

“That’d help, honestly.” The slightly crooked smile he’s given is laced with amusement, “I can’t believe you’re going in the water, maybe I should keep you two on the beach with me. Away from danger.”

“I’m such a daredevil, haven’t you heard?” Then more seriously, despite grinning back, “You can just sit where it’s shallow.”

“Yeah. Okay.”

## Chapter 4

### Chapter Notes

Writing from George's pov is so difficult, I never do it ughhhh

Anyway, I'm pretty much just updating this every time I finish a new chapter. So the updates aren't really going to be on a schedule or anything, oops.

They take Sapnap's truck since that seems easiest with all the stuff they're taking. By the time they've bought the drinks and lugged their stuff down to the beach, they're all sweaty. George sits under the umbrella in the shade to cool down a bit, observing the beach.

It's decently empty, only a few other people crowded together in bunches with their own things. Nobody seems to be particularly rowdy anyway, it's only 1pm to be fair. He'd been coaxed into buying alcohol for them by the other two, not sure if he really wants to drink in the heat.

It's so fucking hot, he wants to lay back on the burning hot sand and complain. But he'd get shit because they're literally on the beach and he can go down to the water. It's not that far but seems like a mile in the heat.

Sapnap is nearly kicking sand in his face, probably on purpose, peeling his shirt over his head. Sunscreen is being applied over his arms as he grumbles about it, George warily observes how low his swim trunks sit on his hips.

He's allowed to take note of his friend's body, alright? It's in innocence, the younger usually covered up or at least more awkward about skin being exposed. His jaw ticks as he furrows his eyebrows, focused. Admittedly he's more tan than the two of them, he probably goes outside more too.

George's nudged out of his absentminded thinking, unfocused eyes trained somewhere on the seam of black swim trunks that end mid-thigh. The fact that Sapnap has nice thighs is the last thing he thinks before he snaps out of it, not feeling too embarrassed about it when he meets green eyes.

Whatever, he knows his intentions were pure. Amusement plays behind Dream's eyes, lips tugged upwards, and he only makes a noise in acknowledgment of his staring. A *knock-it-off-idiot* noise. The younger looks away then, like the only purpose of the interaction was to get him to stop.

Instead Dream busies himself with pulling off his own shirt, George's heart jumping in his throat at the freckles that trail down. They cover his shoulders and his upper back, stretched over shoulder blades. He knew the other works out and eats healthy, he expected.. He doesn't know what he expected.

Dream is lean from his height, not muscular but the movement of rolling his shoulders back reveals that he's definitely not weak either. His swim trunks also sit low on his hips, George doesn't think he'll be able to handle seeing his front. He ruffles his hair again, taking the sunscreen bottle from Sapnap and musing, "I need a haircut."

The youngest man hums in answer, rubbing sun lotion over his face, turning to the sitting man,

“You need sunscreen for sure.” A halfhearted pointed finger, “You keeping that on?”

George nods, hair falling in his eyes, a bit dizzy from his best friend being shirtless right in front of him, “Yeah. I’ll burn otherwise.”

“You don’t want to show off that hot bod?” Dream turns to wink at him after, hands busy rubbing over his forearms.

His gaze traces the movement, “Idiot.”

“You just gonna stare or..?” Sapnap blinks at him expectantly.

“It’s hot.” Both instantly light up in amusement and he quickly clarifies, “Outside. It’s hot outside.”

“Sure, George.” The youngest is so pleased by his misspoken words.

“Just give me the sunscreen, idiot.”

He covers himself generously, knowing that by the end of the day he’ll be burnt anyway. It dries as he watches Sapnap carelessly run to the water, nearly stumbling over his feet and falling into the sand.

Then he extends his arms out, face tilted upwards, taking in the sun while the ocean rolls over his feet. It’s careless. And endearing. Dream settles in the sand next to George, eyeing the water warily, “He’s an idiot.”

“If he gets burnt it’s his fault.” The sun casts him as an outlined shadow as he stays in the same position, still basking in the sunlight. So George joins him, at a slower pace as he trudges over.

He intertwines their fingers as he takes in the sun in solidarity, standing at his side. The ocean is bearably warm when it hits his skin, he traces his friend’s side profile with his eyes.

It’s weird to be holding his hand at a beach in Florida, standing side by side. Appreciation for the moment curls in his throat, leaving in words melted away by the heat, “Love you, Sap.”

The younger blinks his eyes open, fingers tightening around his own. He seems to get it, smiling tenderly at the obvious moment of softness, it’s rare for such vulnerable words to leave the brunette’s mouth. Then he turns away, closing his eyes again, saying as easily as ever, “Love you too, George.”

There’s a beat of silence, the sound of the ocean around them, smiles on their faces. It’s broken so easily, something hitting George’s ankle with a rush of a wave, he lights up, “Ooh, look.”

The shell is shiny, purple and white in an odd pattern from being run over by sand. It’s not even chipped or broken, he presents it happily to the other, held between his index and thumb.

The moment is over, neither seems to mind. Sapnap takes it in his hands easily, looking it over before concluding he likes it. He gestures back to their stuff, where Dream is still sitting, “Go put it with our things, you can put it in your room.”

George turns to do so, eyes squinting in the sun already trained on him. The blonde leans back on his hands, legs extended in front of him, asking with the tilt of his head when he’s close enough, “What do you have?”

He shows it, the shell being turned over in careful fingers, swallowing dryly at the distraction of

big hands. Then he plucks it lightly from the other's palm, putting it away in a pocket of Sapnap's backpack, "You gonna go to the shore?"

"I don't know." His voice is a bit wobbly now, George turns to meet his eyes.

He tilts his head sympathetically at the worry in those anxious green eyes, "You can walk back with me."

Dream runs a sandy hand through his hair before wrinkling his nose at the mistake, palms that are probably sweaty dragging down the front of red and black swim trunks. That startles George to pay attention to the fact that *oh, Dream's bare chest.*

He blinks away from the muscles held taut by his position, extending his hand to help the other up, "It'll be okay, promise."

It takes all of his strength to pull the bigger man up, hand being clung to afterward like his life depends on it. There's sand between their palms and fingers uncomfortably, he doesn't really mind. It's a slow pace towards the water, George being unwilling to move fast in the heat and Dream being reluctant to be near the water.

Fingers press harshly into the top of his hand when they're just one step away from the water, pleading. But George drags them forward, looking up at his obviously fearful expression, "It's alright, I've got you."

Finally eyes leave the water, wavering over his face before jumping back to staring at the cool blue. It's harmless, just water, but Dream acts like it's going to kill him instantly. Water laps at his ankles as he watches the other standing just an inch away from being touched by it.

Then George tugs harder than before, a tight hand closing around his shoulder as the taller is forced forward. And it's done, Dream is standing in the ocean. Looking like it pains him to be there but he's in nonetheless. The older soothes, "You did it, you're fine, I'm here."

Wary eyes are trained on the water, refusing to move, watching the sand be pulled and pushed by the tide. He's still clinging to him, stiff, and George takes another step further back. Instantly his hold tightens, "No. No, I'm fine here."

"Okay, that's fine." He brushes soft fingertips over his forearm with his free hand, following beauty marks spread on his skin. Then he looks up, to eyes still not focused on him, "Dream."

A hum in answer, attention unmoving.

"You're making it worse for yourself." Then sharper, "Look at me."

Finally *finally* emerald eyes drag upwards to his face, snapped out of his trance at the stern tone. He still seems to have no words, fear still sparked behind his eyes as they look back and forth between darker ones.

"Would I let anything bad happen to you?" George softens his words, voice sweet and inquiring. He lifts with a delicate touch the heavy hand on his shoulder, running fingers over his palm when fingers twitch with anxiety.

Dream breathes, "No."

"Exactly." It's exactly the answer he expected and wanted, "You're okay, nothing's going to hurt you. Promise."

Then George pulls, yanking his hand away to wrap his arms tightly around his bare waist. Skin against his own sends sparks through his entire body, he tucks his face against his freckled shoulder. It's like he's the vulnerable one, like he's the one needing reassurance.

There's a fraction of relaxation in the other's body before George pulls him another step further. Hands falter in their need to grasp his back, only grazing as Dream gasps, "*George*, don't- I can't--"

"Just one more." And it's a bigger step now, water up to his knees and Dream's calves. The warmth of the other man against his front is taken away as he takes the next step back by himself. He's reached for, shushing the words ready to leave open coral lips, sliding his palms down smooth forearms soothingly.

It's less contact, desperate hands wrap around his arms right below his elbows, there's obviously no intent to stop this contact. He doesn't mind, it wasn't his plan, Dream is standing further from shore with minimal contact. A complaint, "George."

He tilts his head, smiling, "Look at you. You did it, you're in the ocean."

A grimace crosses his face, eyes frantically avoiding the water, "I really don't like you right now."

Sapnap's shout makes both their attention snap away from each other, "What the fuck?" The yelling is unnecessary for how close they are to the shore and how the youngest is only to the side of them. He wades through the water with more splashing than necessary, clapping an unsteady Dream on the back, "You did it!"

The blonde's hold is nearly bruising now, "Don't- Don't do that."

A big grin that's so proud has taken over Sapnap's expression, "I don't know how you did it, he usually won't even touch the water."

"I'm right here." Then Dream makes a face, "I don't *want* to be here."

George rubs the pads of his thumbs on the inside of his elbows, "You're okay though."

"Saying I'm okay doesn't *make* me okay."

Sapnap points out, "You are though. You're still alive, right?"

Dream hums begrudgingly about that. George tugs, "C'mon, let's sit."

An absolutely terrified expression crosses his face but the older pries one hand away before leading the way back to shore. It's a few short steps, they stir up sand as they go, and settle where the waves are just barely washing over the shore.

Shaky hands steady the blonde as he sits, fingers pressing into the sand a bit, George moves instead to hook their arms together. It provides comfort while still freeing his hands, sitting close beside him. Sapnap sits on Dream's other side, not touching in fear of creating conflict but still close enough to be comforting.

They sit in peaceful silence together, the sun laying over them comfortably. The ocean runs over their legs that are extended in front of them, George presses his knee against his friend's to provide further reassurance about it. Eventually, Dream breathes, "I can't believe I'm sitting in the ocean."

Sapnap hums, "You've been brave today."

George misses the smile shared between them, eyes trained upward on birds in the sky. Peace has settled deep in his chest, he basks in it quietly. His eyelashes help shield him from the blinding sun, looking over the ocean that disappears on the horizon, “You’ve got to admit it’s pretty though.”

“What, you don’t miss all the clouds in London?” It’s a mocking British accent from the youngest.

He curls his legs up, knees half-resting on the blonde’s thighs, looking over at the other and admitting, “No. I don’t.”

He’s comfortable. Home, he’s home. Dream hooks an arm around Sapnap’s shoulders, always the one to get sappier, “I love you guys.”

George nods, already grinning about his words, “Me too, I also like me and Sap.”

Dream chimes teasingly back, “*Like.*”

And Sapnap doesn’t mention his earlier words, even at the chance to tease, instead smiling contently at the other two. George splashes the look right off his face and Dream sputters at the face full of water he gets as a result of being in the wrong place.

The youngest rises with a dangerous glint in his eyes and George jumps up instantly to avoid the consequences. Admittedly, he’s not athletic. Running on sand in the heat makes it easy for him to be caught up with, being grabbed around the waist.

He pleads, pushing at arms as he’s lifted, “Put me down, you idiot.”

“Your fault for being slow, Gogy.”

He struggles until he’s released, being carried and then practically thrown into the waves. He scrapes his knees on the sand at the bottom, pushing upwards and glaring at the other. It’s not as threatening as he would like with his vision covered by his wet hair, Sapnap howls with laughter.

It’s only waist deep, he rises and shoves the other. Again, he’s not athletic and his laughter increases when he doesn’t even stumble. In a want for revenge, they grapple and George gives up on denying he’s not going to be pushed underwater.

So he just digs his fingers into the other’s skin and clings when he’s pushed. It works, a moment off-balance leaves Sapnap tumbling forward and consequently on top of him.

He’s pressed flat on his back in the sand, feeling the swirl of a wave wash over them, trapped. He luckily got a mouthful of air before going under, not panicking because the younger is quick to push up and scramble off him.

Sapnap looks like a wet dog, shoving up his wet hair to scowl at him, wave crashing against his chest. George laughs breathlessly, slicking his own hair back messily, the youngest annoyed, “Fuck you, George.”

They’re further out as a result of their fighting, standing as the air now feels cool against wet skin. George’s shirt clings to him uncomfortably, he peels it off his chest, aiming a weak shove at the other afterward.

But he’s pulled away from the next fight by the sight of Dream, now standing at the shore and looking at them worriedly. It probably looked pretty bad with the two of them disappearing under the surface for a long second. Especially to someone scared of the ocean.

George's elbows and knees hurt from the rough sand, probably scrubbed red, he offers a reassuring wave to his friend at the shore. Waves are still hitting Dream's ankles, he's alone and still standing in the water. Sapnap elbows him harshly, "Think we can drag him out here?"

"Maybe the two of us."

The younger stretches his arms upward, expanses of tanned skin on display easily, asking, "What magic did you work to get him in the water?"

"I just.. pulled him forward. He didn't like it, obviously."

"It's because he's like in love with you. If you pleaded '*Oh Dream come save me,*' he'd probably do it."

George doesn't appreciate the higher voice to mock his own but simply waves his hand in dismissal, "Are we gonna drag him out here or not?"

He's shoved harshly, falling back under the surface, scratching his elbows again before he pushes himself upward. Sapnap is already on his way over to their friend, laughing.

George hurriedly pushes himself to his feet and chases after him, calling, "We're supposed to work together, you idiot!"

Dream only looks worried about them, eyes checking for injuries, too caught up in his head to respond much to hands pulling at him. Sapnap pushes his back, George fighting against the hands snapped to attention at the realization of what they're doing, "Guys, this isn't funny. Stop."

The brunette in front of him drags his lip between his teeth, catching his hands. He gets the look over their friend's shoulder that clearly screams *distract him again*. And George has got a stupid mouth that runs on its own accord, amused by the event happening, calling, "Eyes on me, 'kay?"

And his eyes *do* stay on him, watching his lip get dragged between his teeth a second time and the way his wet hair is already curling up again. It's easier progress and they're nearly waist-deep in the ocean now, he drags the now loose hands in his own upwards.

Those thick fingers shy away from his cheeks, unsure of touch and permission like George isn't the one putting them near. Waist deep water and Dream is shoved harshly by the other, snapping out of it. Too late, he's dragged down and under the surface.

It's not harsh, they don't hold him under, it's just enough that he falls back. Dream comes back up to the surface like he's just been drowned though, intelligent eyes dumbed by absolute panic of being under. But then they sharpen, irritation sparking, "I told you guys to stop."

George is sadly first targeted, being in front of him, making a noise of shock as he's shoved back. It's rough but gentle enough to show there's no real intent of harming him. No real anger. His feet get tangled in an effort to steady himself and he falls, breaking the surface again with a loud laugh.

Sapnap going under is more intentional, there's obviously more comfort with the two of them fighting, the shove isn't held back at all. Dream's hair is light brown when wet, the freckles that George loves so much barely visible under water droplets.

He's standing in the ocean, dripping with water, looking like the most beautiful person George has ever seen. He almost wants to hide under the surface forever with the lit-up look he's given, heart bursting in his chest. Oh, butterflies, his cheeks go pink. Dream tilts his head, asking, "What?"



“Want to go build a sandcastle?” *I love you.*

“Yes!” Sapnap answers for him, already excitedly making his way there. He has so much energy today.

Once he’s out of earshot George gestures to him vaguely, “You coming?”

The smile wrinkles the corner of his eyes and they seem to twinkle as he looks down at him, “Yeah, Georgie.” *I know.*

## Chapter 5

### Chapter Notes

Ayyy update! I was gone all weekend out of town for a Hella Mega Tour concert, which is why this one took longer. It's also a longer chapter, I had zero idea where I was going with it, I just knew I wanted that last bit.

Anyway, enjoy, I guess.

(Also, Sapnap totally seems like he'd like sherbert ice cream haha)

George has decided officially that he hates the feeling of sand on his skin. His elbows still burn, the sun beating down on the back of his neck and making him want to submerge himself forever under the cool water.

He's sitting right at the edge of the water, on the wet sand that goes untouched by the reaching waves. To get water easier, Sapnap had said. The youngest is.. still full of energy, that's for sure.

He gets it, their first outing with the three of them, he's barely arrived in Florida. But he wishes he'd shut up at least sometimes, he's talking nonstop about everything and anything. George just works at scooping up damp sand and piling it onto the sides of their pathetic hill of sand.

Dream is laying with their stuff, George mourns the now dry skin that was once damp and shiny in the sun. A towel is laid out under the blonde as he lounges in the sun, sunglasses placed handsomely on his face as he's laid back. But also, back to Sapnap because he doesn't want to get carried away, he's glad that it's just him and the youngest.

He said he wouldn't make him feel excluded and he's not. His words fall on partially deaf ears and turn into a blur in his brain but at least he works up the energy to add something sometimes. The sun is draining him, he swears.

He nearly jumps up at the opportunity of Sapnap asking him to get a beer, uselessly trying to dust sand off his hands on his sandy swim trunks. The sun is also making him dumber, he blames. Maybe without it, he'd have the will to tell the youngest that drinking in the heat is a bad idea.

In the end, he doesn't care that much though. He might even get a drink himself. His eyes stay glued on Dream as he walks along the hot sand, watching the rise and fall of his chest that puts him at ease.

He hasn't screwed anything up by dragging him into the ocean, he's not mad. George is surprised that he wasn't genuinely angry, by the way Sapnap had questioned it; he thinks it might have to do with the fact that it's him. How could Dream ever get mad at *George*?

Genuinely, when he turns the idea around in his head, he doesn't really think it's possible. And if so, it'd be a small amount of time before it's resolved. Because he can't stand the idea of his pretty face contorting into anger at the sight of him, can barely manage to picture malice behind his eyes.

It makes him wince, diverting his eyes to make sure he doesn't step on any sharp shells in the sand. It's cooler under the umbrella, he didn't realize how hot it was under his feet until he steps onto

cooled-down grains. The beer is cold under his fingers in the little cooler they brought down, he grasps onto the neck of the first bottle he feels.

When he stands up straight again all the blood rushes to his head and makes him feel very dizzy. So he sits, sheltered in the shade, Sapnap turns at that exact moment to give him a look. He holds up a hand with all five fingers extended, needing to cool off a bit.

The bottles have caps you can twist off, sharp around the edges and digging into the soft sides of his fingers. He huffs, wishing to feel the cold beverage down his throat but also not wanting to draw blood. As if sensing his distress, Dream calls, "George."

He's still laying in the sun, the older man is greeted with his reflection in those sunglasses and an outstretched hand. George's expression immediately flattens into annoyance at the way that the other twists open the cap with the inside of his elbow and a quick motion. He takes it back and deadpans, "Hot."

Lips immediately pull upward, sharp canines exposed properly with the way one side is higher. Right, too focused on his pretty mouth. He turns instead to drink, just as refreshingly cold as he was craving. It gives him goosebumps instead and he moves to sit in the sun next to the other. Dream muses, "Your sandcastle sucks."

"First of all, it's amazing." He lifts a finger, pointing it accusingly at him, "And you bailed on us. So I'm stuck with someone with absolutely no brain cells and--"

"Like you have any either."

"I *will* pour my beer on you."

Dream puts his arms above his head, stretching out, leaving George's eyes to train on his happy trail while he's looking away, "Do it, it's probably cold. Would feel nice."

He makes a face, "You'd be sticky."

Lips pull upwards again in that crooked way, amusement shining through the honey of his voice, "You can lick me clean."

George immediately chokes on his spit, turning to cough and hide the flush of his cheeks. The other man giggling next to him doesn't help. The older rubs a wary hand over his warm cheek, training his eyes instead on the blue water, "You're such an idiot."

He hopes and prays that the other doesn't notice the shakiness of his hands when he goes for another drink. He doesn't, easing off, "That's why you're with me instead of working on your pathetic sandcastle."

"The heat is getting to me," he half lies.

A hand waved lazily, "You're literally sitting in the sun."

"You looked lonely." *And lovely.*

"I'm okay, Georgie." A beat of silence and then the meek joke, "What, did you want a picture or something? I'm kind of a big deal, you know."

"Hm." Like he's considering it and then he realizes he needs to ask eventually, "What are the rules for that?"

A hum of approval for the question, then, “You can take pictures, just no posting them, of course.”

“So I could take one of you right now?”

“If you want.”

He teases, “What if I decided to post it anyway?”

“I’m trusting you not to.” A shrug, “I’d probably get mad. I’d *cry*.”

And the last part is said mockingly but George doesn’t doubt that he would. The thought of Dream being mad at him makes him wince all over again, internally dying a bit at the very idea. He pressed the cold bottle against his cheek, softening, “I won’t. Only because I don’t wanna see you cry.”

He gets quiet laughter in response to that, “We need to announce that you’re here, though.”

“I don’t have my stuff, I figured a stream.”

“With Sap?”

He tilts his head, taking another drink, “Yeah, I didn’t think about that.”

“Here,” Dream sits up, leaning over him to grasp his phone, blonde hair tickling his nose. Fingers intertwine with his as George’s phone is tilted to recognize his face. It’s a careful picture that’s taken of their hands, smaller fingers pressing indents into the back of a tanned hand with nervous fingertips.

They both carefully look it over, that it’s just their hands with the beach in the background. George takes his phone, steadying his beer between his thighs, “Post it another day.”

“Why not now?” Impatience bleeds into his tone.

“We’re at a public beach in Florida, Dream.” He doesn’t expect their faces to be so close when he looks up, swallowing dryly. His beer is taken from between his thighs, the other drinking the little bit left without asking. He nudges him hard with his shoulder before getting up, “I’m going back to Sap.”

He grabs a beer before he goes, shocked again by the coldness, feeling eyes on his back as he walks. The youngest is sitting and staring at their work, which still looks terrible, relief washing over his features when the drink is offered to him, “Finally.”

He twists the cap off easily with his hands and George wants to swear at his own incompetence. Instead, he swats at the back of his head, “Shut up.”

The wet sand is colder than he remembered, sending chills up his spine with the feeling on the back of his thighs. Sapnap takes a drink before elbowing him back in retaliation, “Have fun with loverboy?”

“I had to sit down because of the heat, idiot.”

“Yeah, that’s why you sat in the sun.”

Honestly, fuck both of them for being annoyingly observant. If he wants to sit in the sun then he’ll sit in the damn sun. He rolls his eyes but his cheeks still go pink, “I’m not allowed to sit next to my best friend?”

The younger picks at the label with his nail, “Not when you look like you want to jump on his dick at any given moment.”

Instantly George’s arm flings out to whack him in the chest, “*Sapnap!*”

He gets soft snickers, feeling warmth fall over his chest and ears as well as his cheeks now. Just his luck, he’s been followed back, “What are you two fighting about?”

Sapnap’s laughter grows until he’s coughing from the force of it. And George just burns and wishes the ground would swallow him up, “Nothing.”

The blonde bumps a beer bottle against his shoulder, it’s already open for him. He grasps it, hating that he’s always so considerate for no reason. Dream sits between them and instantly starts fixing their castle, his own beer perched between his thighs.

Of course he smoothes it down and shapes it easily, stopping occasionally to tilt his head back and drink. The protruding of his adam’s apple and apparent stubble growing in makes George look away quickly. He has to hush the thoughts of the rough scrape of it against his thighs and his neck, scratching his nail over the glass of his bottle.

They just sit and drink and drink and watch the sun change positions in the sky. It’s about dinner time when the warmth of alcohol has settled in his bones and he’s tipsy without spilling over into nausea. It’s the sweet spot and he stops drinking then, laying out in the sand and letting cool water rush over his skin.

Sapnap grasps his ankle, shaking it, also pretty drunk and still drinking, “I’m hungry.”

Dream hums, grinning dumbly in a way that blinds you from the glassiness of his eyes, “Of course. Me too, honestly.”

George feels good where he is, maybe a bit hot but still alright, bumping the back of his hand against the blonde’s knee, “I kinda want ice cream.”

Skin against his own makes tingles fly through his fingertips, he grins at the feeling. The youngest releases his tight hold on his ankle finally, taking a drink sloppily, “For dinner? Sounds irresponsible, I’m in.”

“There’s a shop on the pier,” Dream supplies, eyelids drooping.

The trek across the sand burns the bottom of his feet, he’s made the other two grab most of their stuff. He stretches his arms high above his head, savoring the strain felt after laying limply in the uneven sand. It loosens his shoulders and exposes his stomach momentarily to the sun, he thinks absentmindedly that he’s probably sunburnt.

The wood of the pier is thick and chipped with paint, metal bolts securing the planks all the way across. He can see between them, the crashing waves seem so far down and a rush of wind paired with the sight makes him feel unbalanced.

A free hand folds tightly around his waist in a nervous way, the blonde’s gaze and stance seem uncertain. His mind circles through reasons why before *oh right, he’s scared of heights*. Then his stupid tipsy mind realizes Dream’s holding him, making him giggle. Sapnap leads the way with an impatient, “C’mon.”

George doesn’t look down between the planks of wood anymore, eyes wandering over the people on the pier instead as they go. He hopes he’s not recognized, a man that fits Dream’s description

clinging to him would not be a good picture to have taken. He'd never forgive himself.

The ice cream shop is less of a shop and more of a stand, his eyes catch on the dull colors that he figures are probably bright. Blue and white, he sees those colors, though maybe not in the right hues. And.. pink? He turns to ask Dream but the taller man looks too nervous to be burdened with such a dumb question.

Sapnap is already in line, tapping his foot and peering at the clouds with zero patience. His waist is squeezed and he gets unsteady words in his ear, "Yes, it's pink."

George brightens immediately, laughing, pulling him along to stand next to their best friend. He's not used to being around someone who knows him so well, who can read his mind and be kind enough to answer while still terrified of where they stand.

Sapnap's ticking jaw only eases when they've got the cold treat in their hands, expression smoothing over with satisfaction of sherbert ice cream. Which is a gross flavor, George points his spoon at him and makes a face. The youngest giggles around his bite of ice cream, "Shut up with your *plain* vanilla."

"Lemme try," He scoops his spoon into his friend's without even giving time for a response, letting the fruity taste wash over his tongue. Okay, not that gross of a flavor. He offers his own cup over for a spoonful to be taken in return, "At least it's not caramel."

Both of their mouths quirk up as they look to their other friend, who seems more occupied with his sweet. Probably to distract from the fact that they're up decently high. Then Dream looks up, looking between their expressions, "What?"

His cup is already tilted towards George by the questioning movement of his hand, he takes a scoop once again without asking, "Nothing. It's good."

"Yeah, it is." Dream tilts it towards Sapnap now, who shakes his head. His hands are trembling, George hooks their arms together to steady him, pulling them back to get off the pier. He feels unbalanced with the difference in height of the wood, wishing they'd done a better job building it whenever they did.

Sapnap picks back up his talkativeness, "I think we should go home now."

"Why?" George looks back at him questioningly.

A shrug, "So I can take a shower and we can continue drinking, Gogy."

"More drinking?" Dream raises his eyebrows, "You're going to get sick."

Sapnap bumps their shoulders together as they walk, in a way that easily communicates that they'll be fine. George hums, squeezing the blonde's bicep between his arm and side, "You good to drive home now?"

"After I finish this," He chimes, worried expression gone now.

And that's reasonable, he stopped drinking a while ago. When they arrive safely home, his attention is drawn away from showering off the sand by stronger alcohol. Vodka, to be exact. He doesn't question how they bought it, simply wanting a shot. Or two. Or three.

First few days in Florida, it's alright to go crazier than usual. It makes him nearly fall getting into the shower after, steadying himself and making sloppy work of getting clean. Whatever, comfy

clothes are better than swim trunks that rub roughly between his thighs.

They're hung hastily outside, he thinks he spends a few minutes gawking at the big backyard and pool too. Sappnap is on his stupid pc when he enters his room, forgetting to knock and apologizing for it minutes later. He collapses on his bed, sprawling out and feeling a bit sick from ice cream and alcohol mixing in his stomach.

But it's not unbearable, not to the point where he thinks he might throw up. His friend is playing Minecraft, cackling about something that.. Quackity, he thinks, says. He recites it to George but he doesn't have the mind to offer more than just a weak smile. He gets a stern finger but dopey smile, "Don't throw up on my bed."

It's half a joke, that gets a laugh out of him. He's glad to have put on socks, feeling his fingertips already going numb from the cold. Dream looks absolutely delicious when he enters, fingers tangled in wet hair as he enters, sweatpants low on his hips. George trains his eyes on the ceiling to avoid doing anything dumb.

It doesn't help that the blonde squeezes onto the bed with him, cheek resting on his boney shoulder with a content huff. A heavy arm is thrown over his stomach, leg hooking around one of his, forcing them into a position that screams domesticity. Dream's voice is soft, breath fanning over his skin, "You feeling okay?"

"I feel great." He smiles dumbly at the ceiling, eyes still tracing patterns. Then he thinks to add, "Tired, you?"

A hum of agreement, he feels the vibration of it against him. Their best friend cuts in, pushing his chair away from his desk, "Let's watch a show."

George is pulled up limply by Dream, who looks absolutely dead on his feet. Sappnap has already padded out of the room, the brunette's eyes once again are stuck on shoulder blades. Anything past sitting down on the couch is a blur of more drinking and lots of laughing. He probably looks like a mess to his sober friend, he's aware he gets a bit sloppy with alcohol in his system.

He just knows he wakes up against Sappnap feeling extremely groggy, shoulder being shaken gently. His wide eyes meet Dream's tired ones that squint in the light of the tv. He's nudged again, "Let's get you to bed, Georgie." A firm grip on his elbow helps him up, his balance instantly dragging him to the right, knees feeling weirdly weak. He just lets himself fall, being pulled in and steadied, "C'mon, George, stand up."

He shakes his head, feeling weird and heavy with sleep, not wanting to put in the effort. The tight grips on his biceps press into his skin, making his head spin further. He stands silently for a second, mouth opening and closing, trying to get a grip. He gets out a flimsy, "Just carry me."

Dream wrinkles his nose, sending sparks through George's brain that scream *cute*. His hold loosens, the brunette is almost too busy looking at his love to catch his words, "Fine. But I'm holding it against you forever. How.. How am I supposed to do that?"

"Fucking-" He tries to grasp words to make a sentence that makes sense, stuttering, "Fucking grab me, I dunno. You have permission, it's alright."

Another unsure look, eyebrows furrowed with thought. Then those large hands are off him, only for a second before they're back. Fingertips press deliciously into his waist as he's lifted, he wants to whine at the feeling and barely holds it back in his throat. Instead, he hooks his legs around his hips, they stare at each other for a second.

Dream's eyelids flutter, eyes dashing down before leaping up and away. The older man lays his arms over his shoulders, nearly jumping at the hand that presses firmly on the back of his thigh. His grip has landed just below his butt, tight with fingertips pushing into his soft thigh. He's blinded by stupid panic and his entire body swirls with desire.

He just rests his head against his friend's shoulder, not wanting the rosey color blossoming over his cheeks to be visible. Warmth gathers between them easily, existing from both of them being asleep previously. Careful steps are taken down the hall, his mind hyper focuses on the feeling of their sweatpants brushing together.

George's fingers tangle in his blonde hair instinctively, allowing him to feel the way Dream shivers as a result. But it's over too soon, he's laid down tenderly in Sapnap's bed, getting the explanation of wanting to keep an eye on both of them. Those large hands press over his hips, fingers splayed, keeping him firmly on the mattress.

There's no explanation for that, he wants to arch into the touch and whimper but it's gone too soon. He watches him leave and then lets the soft sound escape, still too intoxicated to know better. Sapnap looks as bad as he feels, having successfully walked, Dream trailing after him.

He collapses on the edge of the bed with a tired noise, laid on his side and facing away from George. Dream squeezes between the oldest and the wall, forced close to his back. It's no different than how they slept before, he's leaned over so a little kiss can be pressed to Sapnap's shoulder, "Sleep on your side, idiot."

And jealousy twists up George's guts, he makes a noise of complaint that he didn't get a kiss too. His judgment is skewed, he turns over. Dream's tired eyes train on his face, widening with surprise at the hand pressing to his cheekbone and curving around his jaw.

Instantly he's backing away, trying to turn his head, obviously thinking that George is going to kiss him right on the mouth in a drunken haze. He's not, fingers sliding off his skin before he presses his face against his collarbones. He's so tired.

An arm wraps around him, fingers tangling in dark brown curls, understanding. It keeps him close, he lifts his head to press his lips to freckled skin, landing under the curve of his jaw. It's just a peck, fond and grateful, "Thanks for the beach day. Was fun."

George feels the chuckle that escapes Dream's mouth, the vibration under his fingertips and against his body where they're together. He hides his face against his skin again, smiling about it. He just gets the response, "Love you, Georgie. Now go to sleep."



## Chapter 6

He wakes with a headache, twisting and nearly jolting awake when he makes contact with the warmth of someone else. Then he eases from the tense position of half-lifting his head. The morning sun hurts his eyes and an ache rests between his eyebrows.

There's an angel next to him, those softened features smoothed over, the first time George has seen him without worry plaguing his mind. Dream is laid on his stomach, arms hooked under the pillow his head rests on, back rising and falling with each slow breath.

His hair is golden with the light peeking in on them through curtains, an absolute mess, falling over light eyelashes carelessly. It'd been George's foot that had brushed his calf, he woke sprawled out on his back, like he's missing the other half of his heart laying next to him.

Which is weird, the temporary image of Dream laying on him in the same position flashing through his head. He'd like that, to let him rest from his worrisome head and rub light fingers over his skin. Would he like that too?

Then he presses his palms into his eyes, feeling the sting of a sunburn and thanking whatever god above that he hadn't kissed him while drunk. It's a fear that rests in his chest heavily, that he'll hang off his frame and brush their lips together to experience heaven on earth. He cringes at the way Dream had pulled away at the hold on his face, embarrassed of his envy and careless actions.

A gentle touch pulls at his wrist, fingers sliding between his own, soft huff audible. He'd been too caught up in his imagination to see the other wake, sleepy eyes tracing over his features. The worry is back and George hates it, a low rumble in the other's chest, "Headache?"

The back of his hand is pressed against the roughness of a stubbled cheek, he watches the blonde's eyelids flutter. He processes then that he's been talked to, "No. Well, yes. I'm sorry about, um, last night. I think I was dumb and embarrassing."

"You had fun, that's all that matters." Breath fans over his fingers, lips brushing over his skin tenderly. George's heart jumps into his throat at the action, mind desperately shoving back with *its platonic*.

He pushes two fingers out to rub gently over his rough jaw, making it seem mindless despite his internal panic. Then he lets his lips pull upwards, "You're not mad I made you carry me?"

A lazy shrug, George's gaze trains on the curve of his cupid's bow, pink chapped lips taunting. Sharp canines are exposed then, just with the slight twitch of the corner of his mouth, "You're light, it was no big deal."

He remembers the ghost of that large hand under his butt, the way the sensitive skin had been squeezed. Dream is a possessive person, is he possessive of him? Heat swirls in his lower stomach at the very thought, he hides his face against his friend's shoulder so he can't see the way his eyes darken.

"George?" It's practically murmured into his hair, the other's head still turned in his direction. They're forced close by the brunette's foolish decision to hide against his skin rather than in the navy blankets.

The tone makes him hum, pulling his hand away to smooth away messy hair, looking up so their eyes can meet. Their faces are closer than they should be, "Yes?"

He gets a yawn from the other, analytical eyes fluttering shut momentarily only to open again glassier. They sharpen again, flicking from one of his dark eyes to the other, questioning, "I.. Fuck, okay. You're my best friend, right? And you're here now, living with me."

"Yes, I do believe that's correct." George smiles, smooshing his cheek against the other's solid shoulder, softening, "Is something wrong?"

"No. Yes." Eyebrows furrow, "I guess I just need clarification."

"About?"

"Well," He doesn't seem to know how to phrase it, a hand moving to gesture between them, "This. Like you laying on me and stuff."

George's throat tightens, "Is it not okay?"

"That's not what I'm saying at *all*." A pause where Dream presses his lips into a line, obviously thinking, "We exist together in person now, I'm not sure about your boundaries with touch or--"

"Everything's fine." He cuts in, maybe making himself flustered by the suddenness of his words, emerald eyes widening. He tries again, "I don't really have any. I guess I don't like being dragged along, if you understand."

The attention so intently trained on him makes him feel all warm, "Elaborate, please."

George's nails run soft lines over the cotton of the other's shirt absentmindedly, "People tend to, for whatever reason, think they can just pull me along when they go somewhere. Like, um, not giving me a choice about it. I guess."

"Have I done that?"

"No." He reassures, "You're wonderful. If anything, you worry too much about it. So, from now on, just know you can do whatever."

Dream's hand rises to brush brunette waves off his forehead, "What about stuff like last night? To pick you up I had to hold you like.. I dunno."

George understands what he means, the hot hands on his waist and thigh, remembering how they'd been pressed close. He reasons, "That's okay too. It's the intention, ya know? I knew what you meant by it, it's not like you were trying to make a move on me or something."

"It's okay." It's echoed back to him and he knows the blonde is processing what he's said and committing it to memory.

"Mhm." He brushes knuckles over his cheek, head still resting on his shoulder, "I had the same type of conversation with Wilbur, he freaked out about sharing a bed."

Dream's lips tilt upwards, he's still caught up in his head, "At least I didn't do *that*."

"Debatable. You sounded like you were having quite the crisis before we went to sleep." He thinks to add, "I have good friends," A lingering kiss against his temple, "Thanks for asking, Dream."

Finally his best friend turns onto his side, displacing his position against his shoulder before he's pulled in, a kiss being pressed into his hair, "Don't thank me for doing the bare minimum."

He chimes back, just to annoy him, "Thanks, Dream," Giggling, "For carrying me to bed too."

"I *had* to, you wouldn't stand and then you were all whiny about it. I felt bad."

Humiliation fires up in his cheeks again, he hides his face, "I'm so embarrassing when I drink."

Dream chuckles, "You were so cute, your face got all pink and you laughed so much. I liked it, you got louder and told shitty jokes."

"I don't even remember exacts. I remember starting the show, then it just picks up to you waking me up on the couch."

The blonde wheezes suddenly about something before getting out, "You made a ton of jokes about blowjobs, like I think you threatened to suck my dick like three times. And you thought it was so funny after."

George hits his chest, pleading, "Okay, okay, stop. I don't want to know anymore, save me the embarrassment. I'm so sorry."

"Fine," His smile is audible in his words, "It *was* pretty funny though."

"What are you two talking about?" Sapnap's voice enters the conversation as he enters the room, looking groggy.

"I'm telling George all the things he did while drunk."

A hum, "You were better than Dream is, honestly. Dream's a horny drunk."

George's laugh is so sudden it hurts, pulling away to see the blonde's face, stunned, "Really?"

"Talk about a lady's man, I swear he could get laid by anyone he wants when he's a few drinks in. Man oozes confidence."

"Okay," There's a bit of a laugh in Dream's voice too, "I'm not *that* bad."

Sapnap waves his hand, "Shut the fuck up, you're the worst."

"Fuck," George twists to be laid on his back again, touch on his waist faltering before returning solidly to remain where it was, "You owe me at least the amusement of seeing that. Next time."

The fingers splayed across his ribs make his head spin, the youngest eyes the two of them warily. He just extends his arms to his friend that's still standing, whose face instantly lights up before he sinks into his arms. Sapnap hits his chest almost too hard when he falls, making the brunette make a noise of complaint. In response, there are words spoken into his chest, "What else did you guys talk about?"

Dream's hands move out from between the two, retracting back to his sides, "Boundaries about touch."

"Of course that would be an issue for you two."

"Not like *that*," Then quieter, "I just know I can be too much sometimes."

And George reaches for him, letting his face be pressed against his neck, squished in the middle of the two. It's a comforting warmth, they stay like that for a bit before parting ways to do whatever. He seeks to properly scrub off the beach and something to ease his headache, taking a painkiller before submitting to the temptation of that floral-smelling shampoo.

The water makes his skin burn uncomfortably, reminding him that he's sunburnt despite all the sunscreen he put on yesterday. The heat under his skin makes itself apparent, angry pink flush over his arms and legs and probably his face. He hurries to escape the pressure of the water.

Patches greets him when he's done, startling at the door opening before pausing curiously. He clicks his tongue for her to follow, closing the door behind them and perching on his bed. His phone is sitting on the blankets that are still messy, he sighs when it's revealed the device is dead.

The feline lays against his suitcase as he ruffles through it in search of his charger, he talks to her absently about how annoying it is that he didn't plug it in. He hasn't been on his phone nearly at all, hence never charging it until now, he spots the white cord and grasps onto it.

He waits while it charges a little, shivering and grasping Patches for warmth. She quickly wiggles free with a meow, settling instead to sit with him, forcing him to search through his suitcase for something warm to wear. He can't wait until the rest of his stuff gets here, he pulls on a pair of socks and keeps searching.

Right, the Dream hoodie. He holds it in front of him, looking at it in its wrinkled glory. He'd never second-guessed wearing it before but would it be weird now that he's here? He brought one of his own merch too, it's not the same though. He makes a noise of complaint in the back of his throat before sliding his first choice over his head.

The buzz of his phone makes him rise back to his feet, a notification that Sapnap went live, he looks over to his door and listens attentively. Sure enough, the very distant voice of his friend is sounding overly cheery and flatter. He'll have to be quiet then.

He's got a few messages from his mom and a ton on Discord, he'd explained before that he'll be without his pc for a bit though. That's probably an excuse to ignore them, he smiles to himself. Quick fingers message back his mom, taking a picture of Patches and sending that as well.

He ditches his phone on his bed again before picking up the calico, wanting a blanket. He's supposed to get extra for his room anyway, he's careful going up the stairs with her in his arms. She seems comfy enough burrowed in the baggy sleeves around his arms, one paw kneading over his boney wrist sharply.

George feels like a bother once again when he's standing in front of his friend's door, maybe he should just wait until later. He's careful not to drop the cat as he draws an arm to knock solidly, tucking it under her body again so she doesn't feel unsupported.

Patches stretches out in his hold and he giggles at her, nuzzling his nose lovingly in the fur of her chest. The door opens then and he feels awkward at being caught off guard, looking up with wide eyes at the gentle grin stretched across Dream's face. He stammers, "Oh, uh, I wanted to ask for extra blankets?"

"Yes, of course." Hands slide around his waist, pulling him into as much of a hug as possible with Patches. He murmurs fondly, "You have the baby."

She reaches a paw to bat at his face gently, the brunette nods, "She likes me already."

"It's that." A finger pokes his shoulder, "She sees my logo and thinks you're me."

There it is, the notice of the hoodie. He turns pink, "Shut up, she was following me around before I even put it on."

He's turned around by the firm hands on him, response spoken close to his ear, "Whatever you say,

Georgie.”

A little push forward for him to lead the way, even though he has no idea where he’s going. He’s directed with the occasional brush of fingers over the small of his back, to the hall. He hasn’t exactly explored the house yet, it seemed like any other door to him.

There are many blankets, all stacked neatly folded, George figures that was Dream’s mother’s doing. Three thick ones are grabbed, carried to be thrown on his bed and the stacks become messy. Of course. He sighs, the feline in his hands wiggling to be freed at the noise.

He’s tugged momentarily while letting her go before the other man quickly takes his hands off him and instead requests, “Wanna go watch Sap stream?”

He nods, nothing else to do anyway. He’ll be hit with so much work when his pc gets there, might as well enjoy being lazy for once. Still, he grasps one of the blankets, tugging it around his shoulders before nodding again.

Thick fingers brush over his cheek, taking notice of his sunburn, honeyed voice quieter, “We’ve gotta be quiet. Well, *you’ve* gotta be quiet. Let me text first, okay?”

He doesn’t know why he’s being asked for permission, guided like he doesn’t know how things work, but he nods nonetheless. His gaze trails over quick fingers tapping on a screen, observing the way the brightness drapes across features trained downward.

Blonde hair hangs messily on his forehead, almost long enough to reach his eyebrows. Pretty, he looks pretty. George opens his mouth to tell him so but he looks up then and he’s rendered speechless. Dream tilts his head to the door, a go-ahead, corner of his mouth twitching to smile.

And the brunette hooks an arm around his waist, feeling the solidness of him when he pulls. The strength of it is too much and the younger man stumbles, laugh leaving his mouth as he steadies himself on the doorframe. George presses a little kiss against a freckled collarbone, unable to resist after being hit with a sunny look, tugging again.

He doesn’t pull as hard, they only trip on their feet when they’re further down the hall. His heel steps on the blanket wrapped around him, pulling and making him fall back due to how he’d been walking. Which means he takes Dream with him, the two hitting Sapnap’s door so hard it feels like it shakes the whole house.

Probably scared the shit out of their friend, he has to duck his head down to muffle his loud laugh with the taller man’s shoulder. Their chests have pushed together, George’s back having taken most of the impact, large hands pressed on either side of him in an attempt to steady both of them.

Dream lets his laugh be heard, it echoes through the house, a loud careless wheeze. The older thinks he hears the name idiot mixed in there, his own laugh quieting to little giggles. He’s tugged away from the door, hands laying on his back, and his head spins from the way Dream has leaned down to embrace him fully. It’s a laughing, concerned, “Fuck, are you okay?”

The impact has barely affected him, he’d barely even noticed when he felt all of *Dream* against him, “Yes.”

Waves of pleasure shoot through him at the large hand splayed between his shoulder blades, other hand in brunette tangles. Still, completely oblivious, “You’re such an idiot.”

He giggles, grasping onto the other anywhere that he can, holding shoulders and his neck and waist. The dark cotton of his shirt is smooth under his palms, conforming to the press of his hands

where he touches. He's warm and it's all *so much*, he smiles up at eyes wrinkled with fondness, "We probably scared Sap."

"Scared Patches too," A glance away and back down the hall, he's squeezed, "C'mon."

George doesn't mind being dragged along for once, hands are glued to his waist with one only momentarily leaving to gather his blanket off the ground. Dream turns the doorknob, letting it fall open while draping the thick fabric back over his shoulders. He's too distracted to look over, hearing Sapnap say, "Dream's here. What was that noise?"

Amusement lights up the eyes cast on the effort of covering him properly with the blanket, wrinkling the bridge of his freckled nose, "I fell so hard in the hallway, your door caught me."

George looks over then, to see his friend dressed comfortably sitting with his legs crossed in his chair, they're being watched with such a humorous gaze. The blonde grins at the youngest, who lifts a finger over his lips to signal for George not to make any noise.

He settles instead to be glued to Dream's side, slumped against him warmly on Sapnap's bed.

## Chapter 7

### Chapter Notes

Small timeskip because I was getting bored and I will NOT be giving up on this, I swear.

I think this chapter is longer?? Anyway, enjoy, I guess.

Days turn so easily into weeks, he feels like he's suffocating in the passing of time. Not that he's ungrateful, it's just that he feels he has no grasp on it anymore. It's weird, the gradual transition into living in Florida. He pulls away from contact so suddenly, cowering away from the possibility of being less than platonic in his friend's eyes, feeling cold with it.

He spent many nights switching from room to room, taking turns sleeping in beds other than his own to ease his unrest about change. Until he sleeps within the walls of his own with Dream pressed against him warmly, alone the next night. He hates it, twisting and turning under a fan that sounds different than his in London, unsettled by it all.

His stuff is here, his new desk and dresser being built by his two friends, it's weird to place his belongings in a new space. It feels empty, he's not sure why. And on top of all those weird feelings, nobody even knows he's in Florida. He's gone practically silent on the internet, pressured by questions asking where he is and if he's okay.

The stress sits on his shoulders, it kills him in meetings with managers and merch teams and the filming of new videos. He locks himself away in his room often, pressing his palms into his tired eyes and trembling with the weight of it all. He knew there'd be sacrifices but he really feels it when his mother sends him bright-eyed pictures of herself drinking tea or sitting with Cat.

He misses her. He'd give anything just to crawl into her lap like he's a child again and let her hold him with no questions, in that way she does so well. It's just being confined in these walls, in the house, it never bothered him before. But now he's jumping at the opportunity to be dragged to the park at ungodly hours of the night, just to sit and watch Sapnap skateboard. Even if it means being in the humid weather.

It's a long time coming when he caves, early in the morning craving the feeling of being held. He feels like he's sobbed until he can't anymore, feeling absolutely boneless. It's just all numbness with tears clinging to his eyelashes, barely able to feel the stairs under his feet. He doesn't care if Dream thinks he's majorly in love with him or whatever, he needs arms around him.

His hands are shaky, trailing over the wall of the hallway to the door at the end of the hall. He hates being vulnerable, knocking just once, shivering as he sniffles. The lights are off, he hopes he's not waking him, wiping a stray tear making its way down his cheek. He gets the answer to enter, mumbled so quietly he nearly doesn't hear it.

It takes nearly a painful amount of effort to open the door, he dreads the pitying reaction he's going to get. The dark provides him with some cover, he clicks the door shut behind him before seeking the outline of his best friend. There's a fond tilt to his voice, excitement in the undertones about George finally being around, "Yes?"

It's a rumble in Dream's chest and he *hates* that he's crushing his good mood. He just shakes his head, sliding onto the covers and pressing close. Finally, the warmth and comfort of company. He presses his wet face into the other's shirt, another pitiful round of cries threatening to leave his throat.

It's a first, to be comforted with more than words by his best friend. He's rarely cried down the line to him but it doesn't mean it's never happened, always getting an empathetic voice wrapped around his thoughts. Now, though, Dream's voice cracks, "George?"

His brain screams at him for putting himself in this position, tired and worn out, having isolated himself and then gotten upset about it. He just whimpers pathetically, silent tears falling, disliking that he's made himself a bother now. He's so so exhausted.

Fingers catch the wet trails down his cheeks, brushing them away. He doesn't expect to be squeezed so close, a little kiss being pressed between his eyebrows, tender words murmured to him, "What happened?"

He doesn't deserve that reaction after keeping Dream at a distance for weeks, avoiding contact, and refusing to melt under his eyes. George just clings to him helplessly, careless with it, choking out, "Dream."

"What?" Fingertips swipe away his tears again, "You've got to talk to me, George, what's wrong?"

"I'm sorry." He curves his fingers around his friend's jaw, smooth and freshly shaved, "Okay? You're way too good to me and I've been an asshole to you. Just missed my mom and feel weird and everything online-"

It all feels like a sober drunk confession, spilling from his lips at once. "What?" Dream furrows his eyebrows, "I'm not upset with you. I don't understand."

"I'm tired. And I feel like shit."

"And you're.. Crying about me?" A worried edge to his voice, an almost warning one.

He nods, "I haven't been around you at all." There's a big pause and he adds more vulnerably, "Can't sleep without you."

And he's already cried, he might as well use this time well just to get that out. He feels the way Dream physically softens against him at his words, hands wind up in his hair, it's a pleasant shock to be kissed on the corner of the mouth. It's a dangerous move, accompanied by words, "Georgie. I'm not upset with you or bothered by that, you can sleep with me. Didn't know it bothered you that much."

And he's so fucking good to him, too compassionate for his own good. The way his expression crumbles again is noticed, he's squeezed close again with arms around his shoulders securely. George just croaks, "You sure?"

"Yes." It leaves no room for argument, "What else is bothering you? Your mom, online stuff?"

The warmth of the other is already making his eyelids droop, he just hums and presses closer. One arm keeps him close, other hand leaving to tug the blankets out from under him. He lifts his hip to make the process easier, grateful for the lack of extra fabric between them. It's placed over them, comforting.

It feels like a normal routine, the one he was adjusted to before he was left isolated to sleep in his



room alone. He twists to be turned away, wanting to be spooned, reassured by the instant pressure of his friend against him. Knees press against the back of his own, heavy arm resting over his waist.

The final movement is Dream burying his nose against the nape of his neck, something new. George rests there for a moment, eyes trained into the dark, simply feeling the chest against his back rise and fall. The need to sleep has momentarily left him, he sits with his heart in his throat for many long minutes. Then he requests unsurely, "Dream?"

Hot breath hits his skin at the soft exhale that comes, arm around him tightening, "Hm?"

"I'm," He has the fleeting thought that he's going to be scolded for his next words, "Sorry if I'm not what you wished I'd be like."

He's spoken the words so quietly into the darkness and they linger there for many seconds. Then a leg slides between his own, hand rising to splay over his heart and hold him close, goosebumps rise where he feels the other's nose brush over his skin. Dream's voice comes out a bit thick with emotion, "George, you're wonderful, you don't need to apologize. I love you, I love that you're here, I love that I'm able to be here for you."

He places his hand over the large one on his chest, wishing he could turn his head but not wishing to displace the face against his neck, "I guess I focused on the good so much that I forgot about the bad."

Fingers intertwine with his, "We'll get through it together, we always do. Just *tell me*, I'll be here every time, you can sleep with me, I don't care. As long as you feel better."

George lets those words sink into his bones, mapping out and memorizing the moment. Not a bother, he's being held with no resentment held in the action. Safe. With Dream. Comforted in a way he never has been before, he warms considerably. He asks into the darkness again, "Dream?"

Another brush of a nose against his skin, he feels the heat of a blush crawl up his neck to his ears at the feeling, "Yeah?"

He squeezes the fingers between his own, "I love you."

And they haven't really talked about any of that night since. He'd waken with Dream still in bed but awake on his phone, gentle eyes trained on him at his shifting. His little breakdown goes unaddressed, the only sign that it happened being the analyzing eyes glued to him worriedly any time he does anything out of the ordinary.

But it's better, at least his stress is eased by late nights where he's held close protectively. He relaxes into the routine of it properly now with no limit in sight, letting them sleep with their bodies flush together. He tries, he really does, to sleep alone occasionally but it's useless. He tosses and turns until he gives up and seeks one of the other two, sometimes sleeping in Sappnap's room just to wordlessly spend time together.

Which, oddly enough, the mornings after Dream looks particularly scruffy when he comes downstairs. Maybe they're forming a dependency on each other but that's something George wants to ignore the possibility of. Even though they spend all day apart, his heart craves his company and that's scarily dangerous.

It's difficult for him to suppress the roar of victory in his brain when he goes upstairs in the afternoon and he's reached for instantly. Even if Dream is participating in someone else's stream,

hands are instantly off his keyboard and extended to latch onto him.

Which is a bit pathetic of them to sink against each other like they'd been dying all day, nobody is around to see and call them out on it anyway. It's a careful balance between their time alone and around their friend, it feels like it's a secret that George practically has his own side of Dream's bed. A secret their friend already knows about.

He's just settled too comfortably into easy contact to mind the looks they're given by their other friend. Whatever, let him look, the embarrassment of comments is always hushed away by the face against his neck at the end of the night.

And when he gets his haircut, wanting to look fresh for his first stream in Florida, eyes are glued on him for too long. He doesn't mind, stretching out and seeking the comfort of his mother's voice over the static of a phone call. She soothes him with reassurances he doesn't have to ask for, he asks her opinion on his hair too.

She gushes about him looking so handsome, he feels his neck go hot with the eyes glued to his skin. Dream is waiting, lingering, looking. And George wants, wants him to hook his chin over his shoulder and give his mother that big crooked grin of his. Wants to ask his mom's opinion on him too.

She's lounging in her backyard, bright despite the grayness of London, perfect teeth shining with her smile. He misses her, it aches in his chest for the millionth time. She's bleached blonde highlights into her hair, a new development, he feels as if he's missing out. But she knows that, she fixes him with a warm look at his change in expression, "Who are you looking at so much?"

And his face warms more than the rosy color already dusting his cheeks from his friend's gaze. The blonde had been leaning in his doorway, simply listening in, petting the feline that sits at his feet. Green eyes land on him quizzically at his mother's question, George looks away quickly, "Nobody."

He's a private person, at least about personal things, which is why there's never been a question about Dream not meeting his mother. And vice versa, he's guilty of keeping their friendship mostly to himself. She lets it go, eyebrows raised for a second before she changes the subject to a new type of coffee she's recently tried.

Dream disappears for a bit, which makes it considerably easier to pay attention to the call, returning only after he's said goodbye. He'd left her with the possibility of calling the next day before the stream, just in case he gets too nervous. Their entire conversation is momentarily gone from his mind, he'd really wanted to remember it to soothe his worries, by fingers in his hair.

They tug just slightly, gently, making his eyelids flutter with the want to fall shut. He hums tiredly, meeting a warm gaze that shines with amusement. Sharp canines exposed in a grin, taunting words, "Your mom caught you checking me out."

George scoffs, hand laying over the one now cupping his cheek, "I wasn't, I was wondering what the fuck you were staring at."

"You." Dream sits on his knees next to him, which signals he's not staying long, "Your hair."

"You like it?"

"Dumb question." The grin is back, hands are retracting from him. His grip tightens on the other's hand and the grin softens, "I've gotta go."

“Where?” He blinks up at him, begging him to stay.

The request is rejected, thumb resting on the corner of his mouth, “Got an appointment to get *my* hair cut today, actually.”

“What, why? I like it.”

An eye roll, “It’s too long, looks weird.”

“If I were you,” He ruffles the blonde hair that has developed a waviness with longer length. It covers his eyebrows now, nearly curling in front of his eyes, softening all his features nicely. He’s been staring, he clears his throat and continues, “I’d leave it long, maybe trim it a bit so it has time to grow. Just cut the longest part though, even it out.”

“Since when have you become a professional on what looks good?”

It’s teasing and he snickers, shrugging, “I like it, *okay?*”

“A genuine compliment from George?” Large hands are placed over his heart and he pretends to swoon, “I can’t believe this.”

He bats at his shoulder, “You know what? Nevermind, I don’t care, cut it all off for all I care.”

“Then you’ll have nothing to pull,” And Dream immediately jumps up to avoid the slap that comes, laughing loudly. He always laughs so loudly, George’s face turns pink. He’s out the door before he can even stop and pull him back, hand appearing in the doorway like he forgot, “Bye, George.”

He rubs his palms over his overheating cheeks, “Bye, idiot.”

He scrubs himself of his flustered state and rises to distract himself. He needs something to do with his hands, itching with the need to do something. Anything other than just sitting there. He falls into his desk chair, still not used to the feel or the height, left hand seeking his mouse.

He needs someone easy to be on call with, someone that won’t bother him about the stream tomorrow, that eases his nerves mindlessly. Which is why he calls Quackity, not quite feeling upbeat enough to coo back in that high voice. It goes unaddressed, his friend going on instead to propose a game of bedwars.

Yes, perfect. It’s so easy to fall into easy laughter, relaxing with each game. Then he winds his hands up in his hair, probably messing it up, and requests an opinion on it. Which means turning on his camera, no greenscreen set up yet because the stream will take place in Sapnap’s room.

But Quackity understands unsureness about hair, sure to really be honest with him. His cheeks are pink when he turns it on, waving both hands next to his head with a big grin at the giggles he receives. His hair actually is messy, he smoothes it down, unsure at the silence that momentarily flows into their call. Then, “I really like it. Honestly.”

And the earnest tone in his voice makes George’s shoulders relax, “Thank god.”

A laugh with some worry behind it, “Were you told otherwise or?”

“No. I just trusted you’d be the most honest about it.” A single knock on his doorframe makes him turn sharply, “I’m on video call.”

“With?” Dream is leaning his shoulder against the entrance of his room when he turns, which seems to really be a common place for him lately.

George grins wide at the fact that the other had taken his advice about the haircut, voice involuntarily going softer, “Just Quackity.”

He scoffs, “Of course.”

He’s handsome, so unfairly attractive, eyes trained on him in that way only Dream looks at him. He reaches his hand out, “Wanna say hi?”

Eyebrows furrow at the question, the thought of being on camera a very obvious no. But he tilts his head and Quackity giggles in his headphones about Sapnap being right about third-wheeling. Dream raises his voice slightly, “Hi, Quackity.”

And there’s a whole mess of excitement and kissy noises in his headphones in response. He smiles at the reaction, turning back around to turn off his camera and murmuring absentmindedly, “I’m gonna go, okay?”

The blonde cuts in almost sternly, “You don’t have to.”

“We’ve been on call for a while,” He hums at the goodbye coming through his headset, giggles in his ears about something he’s going to blatantly ignore, “Bye, Q. Thanks.”

A high-pitched “bye-bye” and he ends the call, stretching in his chair. A heavy hand falls onto his shoulder, a kiss being pressed into his hair. His hands instantly seek the other, sliding to intertwine his fingers against the back of his neck and pull him down.

Dream complies, bending further and pressing another kiss to his head, humming out, “Pretty boy.” It’s mindless, thick fingers sliding up his neck and making his eyes flutter shut. They caress over his skin, gripping his face tightly all of the sudden to tug his head to the side, lips pressing against his cheek harshly. His eyes open to meet emerald ones upside down, face still held so roughly that fingertips press into his skin, he gets asked, “Good?”

And he wishes it was about something else. George knows, though, that it’s about the haircut. He wants to keen and arch at the hold, able to identify possessiveness leaking into those now darkened eyes. He nods obediently, giving the answer he knows is wanted, being let go immediately. He mourns the touch instantly.

That type of interaction had never occurred previously, he spends the rest of the day sorting through reasons why it had. Jealousy, maybe. Maybe Dream just wanted to, wanting to get a reaction from doing what George wanted. There’s no hint of that same feeling when he’s held that night.

He wakes feeling absolutely sick from nervousness. Dream is already awake, on his phone but still in bed, the usual. He instantly twists under the blankets, letting out a tired miserable sound, dreading the stress of the day. For now though it only looms over him, fingers smooth down his hair, still in a morning voice, “What’s wrong, Georgie? Bad dream?”

He shakes his head, burying his face in his pillow, muffled, “Nervous.”

“About?” He raises his head to glare at him and the blonde grins sheepishly, “Which part, I mean.”

“All of it,” He huffs.

“Aw, poor baby.” A kiss pressed against his temple, words dripping with insincerity.

“I’m serious, you asshole.” George shoves his shoulder, scowling, though he’s still half asleep so it probably doesn’t look threatening.

Giggles are pressed into his shoulder, arms sliding around his waist, “Okay, I’m sorry. Everything will be okay, it’ll all go smoothly, I promise.”

He groans in agony, head falling back and protesting, “You don’t know that.”

“Have a little faith, everyone loves you. Me and Sap will both be there, we help, right? They’re gonna go crazy, especially with you looking all cute with your new haircut.”

He hums reluctantly at all those valid points, tangling his fingers in the hairs that curve upwards on the nape of Dream’s neck. They only untangle from under the safe warm blankets because they have to, as he fixes his hair he’s reminded of times in college when he cared so much about his appearance. It’s an odd wave of nostalgia, he rubs his face with tiresome hands.

Right, he’s got this. He’s checked by an over-excited Sapnap, caring gaze making sure his clothes are alright and not messed up. George hates the lack of nervousness in his friend’s body language, practically dying inside as he sets up the camera and double-checks everything.

Dream gives him a shake of his shoulders and a surprisingly serious pep talk, he tunes him out in favor of studying the way his lips form around each word. It doesn’t go unnoticed, he gets a sharp shake then a more attentive, “Okay? Ready to go?”

“No.” The absolute blank look that crosses the other’s face makes him grin for what feels like the first time all day. He goes up on his toes, steadying himself with a touch of biceps hidden under a dark green sweater, pressing a kiss to his freckled cheek. Love and appreciation curl through his words, “Yes. Thanks, idiot.”

“I,” His face shifts so fast that George can’t catch all the emotions, Dream tries again, “Okay,” Another beat and then a more sure, “Okay.”

And he’s left alone with Sapnap with a sharp turn away, taking deep breaths. The brunette’s fingers brush his arm, it’s cautiously asked, “You’re good?”

“Yeah,” Another deep breath in and then out, “I am.”

## Chapter 8

### Chapter Notes

I swear that very minimal progress has been made between them, at least it feels like it to me. I wrote literally all of this today, thanks to impeccable music provided by Primus and Stevie Wonder (weird combo, I know), so blame them if this part sucks.

Anyway, this one is for sure a longer part, enjoy

It goes wonderfully, honestly. He's swept up in laughter and fights that result in them elbowing each other, it eases the tension in his shoulders until he's alright and back to normal. After they've ended the stream with promises to do a cooking one, he's squished between his two friends in a big hug.

It's relieving to let the adrenaline leave his body and still be kept stable by the two giggling in his ears, he slumps in their hold gratefully. In celebration, they actually cook for once instead of getting takeout, something healthy because of course Dream has to complain if otherwise. Then he retreats to his room to recount the stream back to his mother, having not called her before it started.

He explains the way the arguments carried into dinner too, just to stay on call as long as possible. Then she has to go with an apologetic smile, sending him into a crisis by ending the call with, "Give Dream a kiss for me, 'kay?"

And that's shitty because she hangs up before he can even stutter away her words. He shoves away the implication that she hears his stupid lovesickness in his words, willing to deny to the end. He's told himself he's not going to address any of that, things are nice now.

He really loves Dream in the green sweater though, or yellow in his eyes. He absolutely glows, George doesn't think he's seen him in the color before, fabric soft against his skin. He almost wants to be foolish and ask him to sleep in it, knowing it's too hot to wear without sweating profusely.

Still, when he sits down next to him, he presses his cheek against it and hooks their legs together. He's greeted with no response other than a little hum of acknowledgment, Dream always being careful to make him feel he's not being ignored. Two hands are on the blonde's phone, thumb scrolling.

Then he clicks it off, setting it down as one hand rests on George's knee, looking down at him tenderly. The brunette is hit again with how good his haircut looks, so glad he took his advice, eyes trailing over blonde curls. It's murmured, "Stream went okay, you think?"

"Obviously." He rolls his eyes, getting a slight upturn at the corner of Dream's lips as a result. George captures the thick cotton of the sweater between his fingers, pinching it and rolling it where it rests over the other's forearm, admitting, "Kinda tired though."

"Have you called your mom yet?"

"Yeah, I did a while ago." And just for the hell of it, having an excuse, leans up to brush his lips

over Dream's cheek. Which, unlike the other, he's not big on kissing even on the cheek. So it's odd of him to do so.

The hand on his knee tightens, "What was that for?"

He shrugs, listing, "Caring, your hair, for wearing that color."

"This?" Green eyes drag over the darker fabric, pulling it off his chest with his hand, "I just threw it on, I need to do my laundry."

Of course. He simply blinks up at him, unimpressed by his words, getting a little scoff in response. He mocks it and the large hand on his knee squeezes again before being removed. His friend turns back on his phone, laying back and patting his chest wordlessly.

And of course George complies, snuggling up to his side, cheek falling again against the soft fabric over his shoulder. His eyelids flutter at the contact and the warmth underneath, an arm sliding under him and around his waist.

It bunches up the baby blue material of his own sweater, exposed skin letting cold air into the warm space between his body and the clothing. He can't complain, soft fingertips sliding under the hem to rest comfortably. Dream's voice has gone softer, making sure, "Okay?"

George nods, hooking an arm around the blonde, relaxing into him fully, "Okay."

"You can sleep if you want, Georgie."

So he does, molding himself to the other's body and letting slow breaths fall over freckled collarbones. He wakes blearily from sleep sometime in the middle of the night, judging by the star-covered sky out the window, the darkness weighing on him. He doesn't get why, turning over to find the space next to him empty.

He frowns, lifting his head and realizing the outline of a figure perched on the edge of the bed. He doesn't quite understand why, no light of a phone visible or anything. George instantly seeks his touch, wondering, sitting up sleepily to drape arms over Dream's shoulders. His face finds the spot in the crook of his neck, he croaks, "Dream?"

He feels lips meet his forearm, a tight hold forming around the spot after. His friend sounds very much awake, like he hasn't even slept at all. There's a numb and stern air to his words that makes all of George's insides jerk with worry, "Go back to sleep, George."

"What's wrong?" He sounds so lost and hurt and small, arms tightening.

The blonde's tone softens accordingly, "Nothing. I'm just going out on a jog, I'll be back."

He hums, "It's the middle of the night, idiot."

"I just," A somewhat helpless frustrated huff, "I need to, I don't know, get some air."

"Okay." George backs off, understanding the need for space. If Dream wanted to talk then he would, he always does. Still, he presses a tender kiss into his hair before letting him go. A silent *I'm here*, just in case. The click of the door shutting sends something sour into his guts, he swallows down the want to follow.

He really does try and go back to sleep, his mind refuses to let the tension in his muscles ease. The sound of the closing front door further sinks consciousness into his bones. He sighs, giving up,

turning over to seek his phone. He scrolls through messages about the stream, answering his friends, before switching to scrolling through Twitter.

It doesn't take him long to find it, furrowing his eyebrows at dnf trending. Because they haven't done anything substantial that would cause the tag to trend, he clicks it to see while racking his mind for anything at all. He nearly jumps out of his skin at the image that greets him, clicking his phone off and sitting up.

Because *no fucking way*. George rubs his eyes, trying to reason that he's seeing things wrong, that he's just tired. Then he tries again, hand falling over his mouth as he observes the picture. The caption taunts him, something about the image being from a month ago and how it'd be cute if it was the two of them.

But he wants to be sick because it *is* them. At the beach, when he'd hugged Dream around the waist to pull him further into the water. And his friend's face is there, fully in the picture, his moment of relief captured sharply. The only thing that stopped them from being recognized is that George's face isn't in the picture.

There's a bit of his dark hair peeking over Dream's shoulder, the taller's head turned sideways to show that now-familiar straight nose and soft features. It's an embrace in a moment that was private and *theirs*. He hadn't even seen anyone taking pictures, he rubs his eyes in hopes to once again deny that this image is spread all over the internet at this point.

George has to take a deep breath to stop himself from freaking out too bad, at least nobody knows it's actually them. He begins scrolling through what people are saying, hands shaking regardless of his efforts. No serious suspicion that it is them, no theories yet. Then his head jerks up to stare wide-eyed at the door.

Dream must've seen, then. Fuck, what are they going to do? They can deny and deny now but whenever the blonde *does* face reveal it'll be obvious. He texts their manager as he goes downstairs, feeling like he's floating. It just hasn't hit him properly yet, he knows.

George needs something to do until the other gets back, busying his still-trembling hands with making tea. Sapnap isn't awake, he strains his ears to listen for him. But there's no other noise than what he's making, he rubs his hands over his face and mourns their previous ease. He rocks back on his heels and burns his tongue.

He hadn't seen his friend's face when he'd left, it'd been too dark. Any hope for a Dream that's thought through the situation goes out the door when he returns. He looks absolutely exhausted, kicking off his running shoes, shoulders sagging. And George crashes into him so hard, tight arms around him.

The taller immediately collapses in his hold, they sink to the floor while hands scramble for purchase on his back shakily. He doesn't need to say that he's seen the post, letting a wet face press against his neck. Dream crying makes his entire heart hurt, he shushes him comfortingly and rocks him slightly.

George aches with the sight of handsome features twisted into something so devastated, he wipes away the tears and holds him tight and tells him everything will be alright. He's never been particularly good at comforting people, simply holding him until he's tired himself out.

Then he guides them back to bed, asking carefully if someone is working on getting it taken down. He asks nothing more after he receives an affirmative nod, gathering Dream in his arms and allowing him to hide his face in his chest. George drags his fingertips up and down his spine,



soothing with repetitive motion until his breathing smooths out and slows.

There's a weird scramble to resolve the issue when they wake, Dream looks absolutely dead on his feet. So the brunette makes him lay down and try to sleep, being greeted with the sight of tears again. George presses a hand to his chest, leaning over to kiss a wet cheek, vowing, "I'll take care of it, promise. Get some sleep."

And since Sapnap is totally lost on how to even react to the situation, standing aimlessly in the kitchen, he sends him into the room to lay with him. The younger has always been better at comforting than he is, helpless fear behind his eyes when they train on George.

Which makes him squeeze him tight as well, forced to be the one keeping his composure. Then it's just phone calls and pacing, working to get the post taken down and if they should address it or not. Eventually it's decided that yes, they should, and it should be on Dream's account because it'd be suspicious otherwise.

Which is a true point, George has never really lectured the fans, it'd feel out of the blue. The two are curled up together when he opens the door, laid practically on top of each other. At first, he thinks they're both asleep but then Sapnap raises his head. It seems the two of them had done more crying together based on the redness of his face.

He doesn't speak for fear of waking Dream, walking silently around the bed to grasp his phone off the nightstand. Then it hits him he doesn't know the password, staring blankly at the request. The youngest extends his hand wordlessly, the screen tilted so he can see each number pressed. *0311*.

Their birthday months. There's an odd look shared between them, something cautious and fond and a total mess. He's not judged for the glossiness of his eyes, taking it and leaving before he submits to his own need to cry about the situation. Not yet, *not yet*.

For a long second, he blindly stares at all the bright apps across the home screen, the wallpaper fanart of the three of them. And he's hit with the betraying feeling of intrusion, despite that he's helping tremendously by taking care of all of this himself. Because this is *Dream's phone*, the one the other held while they talked for hours or slept next to while still on call.

It twists up his insides and he's slapped with stupid pity over Dream's isolation over the years. *Alone*, he had been all alone and sought his company through the static of a call. Once again he blinks away tears, sniffing and opening Twitter. Once again, the feeling of intruding.

He'd written down the gist of what he's supposed to say, clicking to reply to the original post. George is grateful he knows his friend well enough to phrase it convincingly, just so that he doesn't have to wake him. It's a statement that it's not okay to take pictures of strangers and massively spread the images over the internet. He adds half-mindfully that they let them get away with it once with that couple in the rain.

He rereads over it a million times, trying to imagine how Dream would phrase all of it. Then he deems it okay, sending it out for the fans to freak out over and critique and agree with. The push and pull of social media exhaust him, he'd forgotten that during his little break.

The first question that is asked over and over is if it's the two of them. George figures they'd be making it a big deal if any of them commented more, he closes the app. There, it's taken care of. People are working to get it taken down despite the comment, just so that Dream's face isn't still plastered all over the internet. He hopes that now those who reposted it will take it down after seeing what he said.

Now he climbs the stairs, taking his own phone up with him. He sets them on the nightstand that's on *his* side of the bed, climbing under the thick off-white comforter that he's now used to. George just presses his face between Sapnap's shoulder blades, pathetically squeezing close just for any contact at all.

He once again doesn't let the need to cry reach him, shutting it down with reassurances that things are being fixed. Instead, he welcomes sleep, wanting the stress of the moment to end already. It's easy, dreamless with the comforting warmth against his front. And then it's gone, sliding away from being against his face, he reaches with eyes cracked but stops at Sapnap's, "I need to pee."

It seems that Dream's also been woken by the movement, the absence of their friend allowing their eyes to meet. George shifts instead to collapse against his chest, tucking his face out of sight, an arm coming around his shoulders. And sleep has weakened his resolve because he's crying before he can even fight it.

He's *crying* against the man that has suffered much more over the situation. Ugly crying too, sobbing into his shirt and grasping onto him. Dream simply squeezes him, like he did last time he was in this position. George pulls away, wiping at his cheeks frustratingly, biting out, "Sorry, I'm being selfish."

"No," Kisses press against his cheeks and the bridge of his nose and between his eyebrows, pausing against the corner of his mouth, "You're not."

"It's just so stupid," His eyelashes cling together with tears, "It could've been *anyone*, how was it us?"

It's a question that makes him feel childish for asking it, childish for wanting an answer. He gets none, two hands tangle in his hair as a sloppy kiss is placed against where coral lips had been hovering, barely to the right of his own lips, "*Fuck*, I love you George, you know that?"

He doesn't understand what that has to do with his crying or his question, eyebrows furrowing. His hands grip tightly against the blonde's forearm, pleading, "What?"

Their noses brush, the words that come make him feel that Dream is still half asleep, "You're so upset for me, 's cute."

George pulls his face away more, mouth working without his permission, "Shut the fuck up."

He gets a laugh in return, one with a slight rasp from emotion. He hates his stupid lack of filter and need to push away compliments, wincing at the sting of his own words. Dream wraps an arm around his shoulders and pulls him close again, "I'm serious, you're not selfish for crying, Georgie. Shows you care."

"I *do* care, you idiot. Shouldn't have to show it for you to know."

"I know." A careful pause and then a softer, "Thank you for taking care of it all, I know it put unnecessary stress on you. You didn't have to."

"I did," He repeats his drunken action from what feels like forever ago, lifting his head to press his lips under the curve of his jaw, "I wanted to."

When Sapnap finally returns from what George suspects as waiting for them to finish having a moment, there's no comment about any of it. No comment about them being squished close, flush against each other like an inch of space will kill them. The younger just slides under the comforter and invites himself into their cuddling.

The post does get taken down, George has to sit by and answer occasional donations about it while acting like he's not still upset. It feels like a random night, when he's got Dream pressed against his back in the dark after a long day of streaming, when the possibility is spoken into existence, "What if I just face revealed?"

Instantly the brunette wakes up more, questioning, "What?"

"Just," A shrug, "Took a picture of myself and posted it online."

George shakes his head at his words, "You need to go to bed, you're going crazy."

"No, I'm serious. I've been thinking about it." The shorter turns around to look at him, to see the earnest look on his face, "I was waiting for you to be here anyway, right?"

He smiles a little, "You'd break the internet. Seriously though, don't. You're being impulsive."

"Am I?" A large hand finds its way under George's shirt, fingers spreading out against the smooth skin of his stomach, "I kinda just want to get it over with."

He relaxes into the touch, humming, "Just wait and think about it a bit more. If you still want to then I'll support the decision."

"You don't right now?" Dream's lips curve into that crooked smile, "What if I just did it now? Then we could go out without worrying about it, could go to Disney World."

"You don't even have a picture ready yet, you perfectionist."

His friend sits up at that and his heart jumps to his throat in fear, "Oh yeah? Is that a challenge?"

"No, no." He sits up as well and the taller's grin stretches wider, "You're serious right now?" Just to make sure. A nod and he rolls his eyes, slinging his arms over the blonde's shoulders and trying, "C'mon, just go to sleep, I'm too tired for your little crisis."

His hair is pushed up off his forehead and to the side with a careful hand, "Just humor me, Georgie."

"I'm not letting you face reveal at," He looks to the alarm clock perched on Dream's nightstand, "1am, idiot."

"Can I face reveal at 2am?"

And he rolls his eyes again, the other so obviously amused by his own words. Then his eyes catch on the movement of the two of them over Dream's shoulder, his eyes meeting his own in the full-length mirror. They're bathed in starlight, he usually ignores the mirror but now the gears in his head are turning.

It's odd to see the two of them like this, with him hanging off his friend's shoulders. They're draped in an air of comfortable contentment. Is this how Sapnap sees them? Lips brush over his jaw, he watches the movement in the reflection, being questioned, "What?"

He's suddenly aware of the intimacy in the moment, the tenderness in the air. Shoving away the weakness in denial over *whatever the hell this is*, his voice has gone all small, "What about a mirror selfie?"

The full-length mirror is just leaned against the wall, forgotten next to Dream's desk, facing

towards the bed. The blonde twists, hand falling back to steady himself as his attention also trains on them in the mirror, “Seriously?”

“Of us.” Their eyes meet, “But don’t include your face, be a tease.”

“Okay.” And Dream’s tone has quieted to match the moment, maybe he’s also noticing the complexity in their current position. A soft breath and then the question, “Now?”

George nods and his hair falls back onto his forehead from the way it’d been pushed back. The lights are turned on and he checks what he’s wearing, what both of them are wearing, domesticity in their soft pajamas. Is that fine? Or should they change because of what it implies?

They don’t, it can be explained away. It’s been two weeks since he announced he’s in Florida, it’s quite obvious that he lives with Dream and therefore sleeps in the same house. They’re simply hanging out before separating to their different rooms, as far as anyone will think. Any other theory can be brushed off.

George didn’t expect to be the one taking the initiative for posing them, his condition being that he gets to post it on his private account. Dream agrees, the brunette’s phone held in his large hand. It’s decided that the phone will be held in front of his face, which leaves his body exposed in less than proper wear for the first time.

The shorter covers him partially though, standing in front, dark eyes trained on them. He’s picky about every little thing, about each wrinkle in their clothing and the background. He knows his control eases the anxiety that Dream is trying to hide away from him. The first is just them standing in front of the mirror, the second with a big hand placed on his hip almost possessively.

The third has him leaned back fully into his chest, sinking into the touch he’s adjusted to at this point. In the fourth picture he’s turned around, fingers tangled in golden curls, Dream’s hand on the small of his back. And they all feel much less than platonic, their stiffness disappearing with each picture as they forget what they’re doing.

It takes them a long second to get back on track, despite a fifth picture being taken of a gentle embrace with the taller’s face pressed into George’s neck. It’s eased the tension of taking pictures, he turns back around to actually take one they can use.

He knows the first was the closest to it, despite figuring it looked odd with them just standing there. So he lifts his hand to give a simple peace sign, Dream’s arm sliding under his to lift a middle finger. And the sixth picture is successful, with him leaning back and his lips curved upwards at his friend’s action.

It’s dumb and still not entirely platonic in nature but it works. George scrolls through all of them first, knowing most can’t be used, before landing on the last one to heavily critique. It looks fine, with his dark eyes trained somewhat downward in their reflection, heavily lidded. Dream’s face is covered completely, hair messy and grown out a bit from the last haircut to a length that’s just right.

His eyes study the slope of his broad shoulders, his freckled arms, the veins on the top of his hand visible from the effort of flipping off the camera. Dream looks absolutely gorgeous while George looks totally fucked out. Which makes it debatable if it’s a good picture to post, it’s an amazing picture objectively but there are so many implications in it. Many that aren’t true.

He’s been staring at it too long while giving his friend not a single glance, his eyes moving reluctantly from the image up to him. Dream’s fingers are tapping on the side of his thigh, gaze

trained downwards at the floor with eyebrows furrowed in thought. George wonders aloud, “You still want to post one?”

“Lemme see first.”

Green eyes dart all over the screen while scrolling through, carefully considering. His friend is going to overthink each one, he knows, so he offers, “I like the last one.”

Which makes Dream pause on it extra long, lips parted as he takes it in. Then he blinks, mouth closing before opening again, “We look.. *You* look hot.”

George laughs breathlessly at those words, pressing close to look over the image again. Fingers gather the fabric of his shirt that’s resting over his hip in a tight grip, once again possessive. Their eyes meet tensely for a long second, he’s absolutely stunned by dilated pupils. Then he clears his throat, shoving them back into that ever-shrinking platonic space, “So yeah? I’ll post it?”

A low hum, eyes lingering somewhere low on his face, “Yeah, Georgie. If you think so.”

The low rumble of those words makes George’s eyelids flutter, desire rising from the muted state it’s always in. He doesn’t act, parting to flip back off the lights and head into bed, refusing to be stupid about their friendship, “Let’s lay back down, help me caption it.”

George doesn’t caption the post what he’s told to with words muffled into his shoulder, simply leaving it captionless. Before he posts it he asks Dream again if he’s sure, he gets a hum of affirmation and sends it out for so so many people to see. A phone buzzes on the nightstand that’s not on his side, the nightstand on the right, the man behind him twisting to grab it.

A soft hum and the sound of thumbs hitting the screen before George’s own phone vibrates. Dream replied to his tweet, he scoffs when he sees it’s what he’d been told to caption it. *Besties <3*. He twists over, missing the warmth against his back, “You’re such an idiot.”

Like his friend can read his mind, he presses close again. Fingers press into the soft flesh of his waist, nose nuzzling into the nape of his neck. The hot breath on his skin sends shivers through his entire body, “*You’re* an idiot, George. I’m just tired, let’s face the consequences of our actions tomorrow, yeah?”

He agrees with a soft hum, mind flashing again with the memory of them in the mirror and those pictures. When Sapnap sees the post tomorrow will he be surprised by the effort to seem simply friendly? Or will he be unable to tell if an effort was even put into it, giving them a look that screams that they *aren’t fooling anybody* ?

George doesn’t know, and with the stark realization of ever-blurring lines, it scares him.

## Chapter 9

### Chapter Notes

Okay, I literally am the worst at dialogue, it's so annoying. But anyway, I finally got to write a lot of stuff I've had in mind for a bit, especially the end of this chapter.

As usual, hope you enjoy

The thought of a face reveal obviously still lingers in Dream's mind, especially with the overwhelmingly eager responses of everyone that's seen the picture of them. He brings it up fleetingly, with unsure gazes from Sapnap and flat rejection of the idea from George. He feels a bit selfish with his voiced opinions, like he wants to keep Dream all to himself.

He's not entirely sure that that's not true. He finds himself often brushing his fingers over those freckles, tracing them until he realizes what he's doing and withdraws entirely. On one hand, he wants to shove as much distance between them as possible so he can reject the thought that he's *falling*.

But on the other hand, last time he'd done that it hadn't gone well at all. And he doesn't want that, admittedly. The soothing of everything in their busy lives at the placement of being tucked into his friend's chest, it's just too good. And if he did want to place a platonic wedge into their closeness, there'd have to be a conversation held.

Because Dream is guilty of pressing close just as much as he is, he can't one day go stiff at hands pulling at him. He can't go back to sleeping alone. George is very much at fault for it, claiming the left side of his friend's bed nearly permanently. He doesn't even sleep in Sapnap's room much anymore, exchanging that time with the other to sit instead in his room. Or go out to the park to watch him skateboard.

Neither of them clings much to the youngest, not in the same way. It goes noticed, in side glances, but there's a silent understanding between the three of them that it's different. That it's not personal. That there's some unspoken *thing* brewing between the two of them. George prefers it goes unspoken and Dream doesn't seem to have a problem with that.

In all honesty, he doesn't even spend too much time with the blonde outside of late nights. They talk the most then, no technology in the way to distract them. So when he does, it's a bit odd to have sunlight coming through the curtains and casting them both in a warm glow.

He's admired Dream in the sun before, mostly in muted dawns or light that seems too harsh for his half-asleep state. Now, though, it's paired with the blue light of his monitors. He's hit with nostalgia for a scene he's never even seen before, blonde waves flattened by headphones.

They both have them on, someone else streaming. Karl, he thinks, is. He'd only wanted to hang out or at least wordlessly squish close, instead finding Dream partially through a rough-looking bedwars game. So he'd grabbed a chair, pulling it up and allowing the extra headset to be put on him.

Too tired to do much, all he'd done was greet everyone softly before watching thick fingers on a

keyboard. It's comfortable, he tucks his legs up on his chair and observes his friend. He knew already, of course, that Dream was good. It's different to see it though, the ever-twitchy fingers finally placed to swiftly dart around and click on keys.

It's his element. A chapped bottom lip is caught between his teeth as he concentrates, eyebrows furrowed slightly, leaned forward in his chair. They barely win, exclamations chiming through George's headset while he watches shoulders finally relax again. Quackity ponders in a beat of silence, "George, what does Dream look like when he plays Minecraft?"

Which is a perfect question, green eyes training on him for the first time since he entered the room. He scoffs, a hand closing around his shoulder tenderly before sliding up to land on the side of his neck. Dream twists a lock of his dark hair around his finger and George finally answers, "Like a tryhard."

"What? I do *not*." A wide grin splits across his friend's face and the strand of hair is tugged playfully. He laughs, especially with the way the other jumps at the sight of another match being started. The hand is yanked away and pain shoots through George's scalp at the harsh action. He gets a quiet apology, soft enough that the mic won't pick it up.

Instantly Dream is back into the game, joining in on arguments. He sternly tries to direct them, tense again, and George hates the tone difference from his previous words. He rises, to go seek Patches or something, breaking the blonde totally out of his daze of concentration. He pulls off the headphones, stark quietness in the room.

He didn't think Dream would but his focus shifts off his screen and to George, who's standing now. His voice cracks, "Where you going?"

He sounds lost, neediness bleeding into his words. Their friends probably hear it but he doubts the fans can tell. Eyes are on him, seeking something, the brunette smiles, "I dunno."

"Are you cold?" Like he's tuned into George effortlessly, speaking the words right as it hits him that he *is* kinda cold. He's adjusted to the intense air conditioning somewhat over time, but his bare arms exposed helps quicken the numbness that finds a place in his fingers. He's sure Dream knows that, with how much he complains.

He nods, grateful that the movement is for nobody but the other man, "I was going to go find Patchy."

The blonde has died multiple times in the game at this point, he lifts a hand off his keyboard to point wordlessly to his bed and then his closet door. He simply voices, "Okay."

And George turns, getting what he means and seeking a sweater over a blanket. Just something to cover his arms, the closet door squeaks when he opens it. The gaze on him is gone, back into the match as swears leave Dream's mouth. The walk-in closet smells like his friend, his head spins for a second.

Then he thumbs through the articles of clothing that are hung up, feeling each piece of fabric. He settles on a soft one, a deep color that he suspects is purple, tugging it off the hanger. The color kind of shocks him but he imagines Dream in purple and internally dies a bit at the sight in his head.

George has never done this before, the step not yet crossed of wearing the other's clothes. This would toe over the very very blurry line for sure, he reasons. But a more hopeless part of him pleads that *isn't that what he wants?* It is and it isn't.

His own hoodie was a safe exception, Dream's while still being *technically* his. His friend had been nonchalant about the idea, a lazy gesture towards either choice, always wanting to help. It makes him feel taken care of in such a new way, he blinks at the fabric contrasting with his smooth hands. He's having a stupid crisis in his friend's closet, he shakes his head.

*Fuck it*, honestly, he slips it over his head. It's smaller than the XL one he's constantly worn, actually fitting the blonde. It's smaller but still long, he can easily picture the way it'd drape over Dream's frame. Tall fucker, he smiles fondly just to himself. It's not what's been imagined by fans in fanart and fantasies about them together. It fits him, maybe a bit baggy but not a crazy amount.

It's even softer on the inside, he rubs his fingers over it before pressing it against his cheeks. Just a little moment for him to savor before he's seen in it, it feels like a safe hug. Even if he refuses to ever let Dream know that. The closet door squeaks again when he closes it, being greeted with instant teasing words, "Get lost?"

George's cheeks go warm and he scowls, "No."

Once he gets close enough, a finger hooks into the pocket at the front, tugging him nearer. He gets an obvious look up and down, "We lost the match."

"It's because you're trash," His lips quirk up. The brunette draws out a sigh at the large hands on his waist, bunching up the purple fabric underneath them, "I'm going to go find Patches now."

Green eyes linger on his face for a long second, darting from one dark eye to the other, before Dream dips his head down to place a little kiss on his stomach. Again, nothing more than an, "Okay."

Probably to avoid cluing anyone that can hear them into what's happening. The blonde's eyes flash at whatever is heard through his headset, releasing him to turn his chair back towards his monitors. George still feels his gaze caressing over his back when he closes his bedroom door behind him though.

He waits until he's safely downstairs before he calls for Patches, voice ringing out soft in an effort to not be heard upstairs. No jingle greets him in the moment of pause he allows before calling again, walking through the house with muted socked feet. Still nothing, he opens his own door to look over made blankets.

His knuckles rap once against Sapnap's door, just to be sure, pausing again before he enters. The younger is editing, music so loud that George can hear it through his headphones. But the feline he'd been seeking out raises her head from where she lays out on navy blankets, sighing heavily at being woken. They both startle at the sudden loud voice, "Fuck! George, you-"

And he's halfway to the cat at the pause of shocked words, he looks away to see his friend's eyes trained on his chest. It completely slips his mind, that it would be recognized, that Sapnap has been living with Dream long enough to know his wardrobe. He perches on the bed, brushing his hand gently over calico fur, stupidly questioning, "What?"

The gaze on the item of clothing narrows, "He knows you have that on?" George looks at it too, fingertips brushing over the soft material, nodding. Sapnap sighs like that's the end of the world, turning back to his computer, "You guys are weird."

"I was cold."

"Were you, George?" There's a bit of a bite in it now, "I hope you know what you're doing, if



either of you gets hurt I'm going to be stuck in the middle of it."

"I can't be *cold*?" He's bluffing, brain screaming to deny deny deny, "He was just being nice, I didn't want to go all the way down to my room."

"You're here now." The flat tone twists up his resolve, "Real good excuse, George."

He scoops up Patches in his arms, holding her carefully, standing, "Shut up, idiot. I don't need this from you."

There are no words spoken to stop him from leaving, from running. As he makes his way down the hall he imagines his friend's jaw ticking in anger. Whatever, he rolls his eyes to the cat, let him go back to editing his dumb video. Dream is deep in another match of bedwars, yelling into his mic about something.

Then he slams his palms down on his desk, the noise startling the calico in George's arms. He sees they lost, the blonde arguing loudly with whoever, it's a bit weird to hear. His voice cracks in genuine frustration and finally the older man takes his seat next to him, fingers curling around the palm of his hand.

Instantly the tension starts easing out of him, his mouth snapping shut like the brunette's presence has shocked him. It's a reminder that it's just a game, not a big deal if they lose. George offers a little smile before taking the headphones off the desk, being met with chaos invading his hearing instantly. His voice is a timid difference to the blonde's yelling, "I'm back."

Quackity coos at him while Karl giggles and comments something about *that's* why Dream went quiet. The man next to him cuts in to tell him to shut up, hand reaching for his phone. It's turned towards him, a goofy smile lighting up Dream's face as he takes a picture of him curled in a chair with Patches. George lifts a middle finger immediately, flipping him off with a roll of his eyes. A few taps of his thumbs and Karl confusedly questions, "Uhh, what?"

"Fresh Gogy content," Quackity exclaims and Dream chuckles lowly.

"You posted that? You idiot!" He scrambles for the phone in the other's hands, sure enough seeing the pictures there. Admittedly, he does look good in them, cheeks slightly pink as he smiles with Patches in his lap.

The blonde leans to look too, hooking their ankles together, voice a hum, "They look fine."

George catches their reflection together on the screen and swiftly opens the camera, aiming for revenge. He does get one, of the two of them awkwardly leaning over the phone, laughing loudly. Dream wheezes and he gets that image too, slightly blurry with the fight over the phone. He shoves his shoulder, "Stop, idiot, I'm trying to take a picture of Patchy."

The cat looks absolutely terrified from the fighting happening over her, eyes wide and aimed at the phone in fear. She jumps off his lap, moving swiftly instead to hide on the bed away from their argument. The device is pulled from his hand roughly, they're both laughing endlessly, fueled by the sound of each other.

The pictures he took are scrolled through, a new wheeze falling from Dream's mouth as he shows him a very blurry picture of them fighting. Karl cuts in, a smile curving up his words, "Yeah, just make us third-wheel, guys."

"No, no," Dream laughs again, fingers moving rapidly across his screen before a new bout of laughter erupts in George's headset.

More pictures of him are shared after that, courtesy of Dream, candid pictures that he's never ready for. It's as if his friend is making up for his inability to face reveal by capturing rosy cheeks or bored expressions. Which brings up third-wheeling among fans, that poor Sapnap is all alone. Which, yes, but also no.

Ultimately those statements about excluding the youngest of their trio make guilt eat away at him. But, again, he can't exactly put a stop to their behavior. Or more like he doesn't want to. So the solution comes up randomly one day, sitting next to Dream on an evening with both of them on their phones.

They're side by side, thighs pressed against each other, not talking much. George just drops his phone and questions, "Maybe the cooking stream should be with the Crew Boys. We still haven't done it yet."

"Maybe."

It's just a hum, distracted, and the brunette bumps their shoulders together, "I'm serious, I think I'm gonna set it up."

"Inviting people to the house without asking first, Georgie?" Dream wrinkles his nose teasingly.

"We could-" He scrambles for words with the hand that slides just above his knee, fingers pressing in momentarily, "We could surprise Sap with it."

"True."

"And it'd be nice to have more help because you can't."

The hand feels like it's overheating his skin through his sweatpants, still resting with fingers just slightly pressing, like a tease of what's possible. Which is all irrelevant to their conversation, Dream is looking at him innocently, "You've sold me on the idea, want me to ask Q and Karl?"

George parts his legs slightly because he realizes he's pressing them together, the hand shifting more at the action, "Yeah, as soon as you can."

"I will now, idiot." A roll of his eyes and a squeeze on his thigh that's so strong it might leave delicious bruises under each fingertip, then it's gone. Hands go back to using his phone, eyes still deceptively innocent as if nothing happened at all. Jerk.

If anything, George figured it'd be Quackity that'd take time to fly down with all his law school work. He figured wrong, it's like his friend was so hyped that a Crew Boys meeting was finally happening that he was willing to sacrifice a little. No, it's actually Karl that got held up. And when the date *was* set, he seemed almost reluctant.

Which makes George toss and turn all night, weird feelings arising at one of his close friends acting like he doesn't want to meet him. Dream just shushes him softly and squeezes him close, soothing some of the worries without requiring an explanation of the struggle. It's an appreciated reminder that he's still wanted and needed, even in person.

The upcoming meetup and Sapnap's obliviousness to that fact have Dream always following him around like an excited puppy, he sees a new spark inside his eyes. So of course George asks if he was like this before he got to Florida and an odd look crosses the other's face, like he can't even fathom this reaction for his arrival.

The brunette laughs so hard that tears gather in his eyes when it's revealed that the blonde was so

nervous that he almost threw up. His reaction to that news makes him receive a pout and then the silent treatment. But, again, there's too much energy in the other's frame to stay quiet for long.

George actively decides over and over again to find it endearing rather than annoying, having to calm his temper into something softer. Because ultimately, it's not Dream's fault, he has the right to be excited. Still, though, the blonde asks him deep in the night, "George?"

He's half-asleep, shifting his back further against his chest and humming, "What?"

The words sound lost, like he'd never intended to ask, "Am I a bother?"

"*What?*" His hands find Dream's forearms and squeeze, "No, of course you're not."

"I annoy you," He counters.

He doesn't deny it, "So what? I don't mind it if it's you, still want you around, Dream."

A squeeze of his arms around his waist and a meek, "You sure?"

"Yes, idiot," George scoffs and twists around to cradle the other's face in his palms, "I moved across the world for you, or did you forget that?"

Dream presses a kiss into the hair hanging over his forehead, "I love you a lot, Georgie."

"I know," He promises.

"I just," His friend struggles for a second to put it into the right words. A defeated sigh and instead, "You help me sleep too. So if I'm too clingy about it, you can tell me."

"You're not." George scoffs, "In fact, I think our friendship, in general, is just clingy. We're as bad as each other but I don't mind that, I like being around you."

"Even in person?"

The instant connection of their fears makes him laugh, which makes the other's face shift. It's not a good expression on Dream's face and the brunette runs a hand through his hair to soothe, "We have the same insecurity. But *yes*, especially in person."

"You.." A green gaze is running all over his face, eyebrows furrowed, "You think I don't like you?"

"No, no." It's a hard thing to admit, "I'm worried you'll stop."

"Stop?" Dream's expression scrunches like the idea personally offends him, "I literally choose to sleep with you, George."

"I know."

"If anything, I'm always worried that you'll leave back to London because you don't like it here. You can't even sleep properly."

"I think," George's eyelids flutter at the warm hand that brushes over his cheek, "We're both idiots."

A hum of agreement, lips pressing against his forehead again. The older tucks his head under his chin, pressing a kiss against the hollow of his throat like a promise. It's a promise of many things,

things that he doesn't feel like addressing individually in the middle of the night.

Dream understands.

It's Karl that's set to arrive first, later in the afternoon, and the two of them are restless. George imagined he would stream or something first, or join a stream. But he's too nervous and his best friend is bouncing off the walls in excitement. It's a relieving contrast, he must admit, he doesn't know what he'd do if they were both nervous.

So he goes out into the backyard for maybe the fifth time ever, sitting on the wooden porch swing that sits shaded by a large tree. It's hot and humid but there's a slight wind that cools his bare arms pleasantly. He watches the light blue of the pool, forgotten floaties moving with the occasional breeze.

He's never been in the pool before and he doesn't feel like it now, stretching up his arms lazily towards the clouds. His poor posture makes his back scream in relief at the action, then he lays back and closes his eyes. George doesn't know where Dream is but he imagines it'd be a lot less silent if he was around.

Instantly his hearing picks up the sound of a slide of the glass back door, he tries not to perk up too much. He expects Dream honestly, but at the new presence next to him that he tries to rest his head against, he realizes the comfortable shoulder he wants is too short. Instead, George shifts down in his seat, adapting to the difference.

Something cold presses against the back of his hand and he moves to wrap his fingers around the smooth glass of a beer bottle. Okay, maybe his stress is obvious if Sapnap has come after him to see what's up. Still, no words are spoken and their time bleeds into the afternoon with cold beverages, occasional smiles shared. It eases some of George's nervousness, he's careful to keep the secret to himself despite his loose-lipped tipsy tendencies.

He feels happy and cozy when they go inside, maybe even a bit excited to get the moment over with and meet Karl already. They only go inside because Dream sticks his head outside, hair wild for some reason, and requests that they watch a movie with him. George is embraced as soon as they step into the house, practically dipped with the almost frantic desperation in it.

Sapnap passes them without a glance, heading for the kitchen, and the blonde tells the oldest that he missed him. He simply giggles, head spinning from the arms around him. The movie that's put on is a cheesy action one, George figures it was picked because it's what the youngest likes. Dream leaves the room to order pizza, nearing dinner time, dark eyes trace his frame as he goes.

George is elbowed sharply by the youngest, jumping out of his trance, looking over with wide eyes. Sapnap's expression is flat, annoyed, "I can't stand you two, just kiss him already if you're going to look at him like that."

"I," His cheeks color pink, "He doesn't want to kiss me."

The elbow that jabs his side this time is much harder, "Dude, I literally watch him consider it every time he looks at you."

He waves away those words, "It'd fuck things up."

"Is that why you're being weird today?" A raised eyebrow, "I'm tired of you guys being weird, just get together already. You'll never know if you never do it, and you know he won't kiss you first."

"Yeah." He goes quiet and Sapnap lets silence fall over them as he soaks in those words. And then

Dream returns, with his large hands working to flatten down messy blonde waves, sitting next to him of course. The dip of the couch cushion next to him makes comfort fall over George, he presses his knees against the side of his thigh.

There's nothing more than that, not in front of their friend, it's an unspoken limit that they don't get too touchy in fear of complaints. He tries to focus on the movie, anxious for time to pass, fingers rolling the cotton of the hem of his shirt endlessly. Until finally there's a knock on the front door, Sapnap wordlessly standing to answer so the other two don't have to separate.

Once it'll go unnoticed, the two of them shift to turn and watch. The immediate stiffness in the youngest's posture is a surprise, Karl at the door with a suitcase in hand nervously. George expects shock and then excitement, or at least a greeting. He does *not* expect Karl to cup Sapnap's face and dip his head down so their lips meet.

The way the shorter's shoulders drop and relax makes George's mind swirl with an explanation for the interaction. He hadn't noticed a single thing that was different between the two, he doesn't understand. It's a short touch of their lips, only for a few seconds before Karl parts from the other completely, hand falling back to the handle of his suitcase, "You've been drinking."

A loose shrug and a toothy smile, "Only a little, want one?"

"Of course, Nick." It's their first time seeing Karls bright smile in person, he steps in with eyes falling on the two still left stunned. He gives them a little wave, a much more timid action than the kiss he'd seemingly spontaneously done, "Hey, lovebirds."

## Chapter 10

### Chapter Notes

The doc I'm writing this on is 77 pages long, jeez. I think I'm writing just to write at this point, I want to get out all the ideas I've had for a long time.

Anyway, enjoy

George takes back everything he thought about Karl arriving in Florida for the next two weeks. Admittedly, he'd been wrong to assume that the other hadn't wanted to meet him too. Apparently, it was more about the whole thing with Sapnap, which still hasn't been explained to them entirely. But anyway, he despises it momentarily as he makes his way to Dream's room.

He loves both of them, both Sapnap and Karl, but can they please *shut the fuck up while having sex*? Like, fuck, he never asked nor wanted to hear either of them. Especially together, that's twice as gross. George had decided to try to sleep alone in his room because of the fear of Karl noticing he sleeps with his friend, he takes back that idea now.

The previous thought is absent from his mind as he hurriedly makes his way upstairs, looking for more distance from the noise. He doesn't even knock, Dream looking up from his phone with an amused smile and earbuds in both ears. George's well aware he has the energy of an angry wet cat, making sure to click the door shut behind him. He squishes close under the covers, the blonde muses, "Yes?"

He shakes his head, disapproving of the amusement, "We need to have a talk with them about this."

An earbud is removed from one ear, Dream shrugs, "It's their first time being together, let them have a bit of fun first."

"Fun at our expense?" He frowns back.

His friend rolls his eyes, "We'll tell them to stop before Quackity gets here, promise."

"Ridiculous," George rests his head against his shoulder, reaching for the free earbud.

He's batted away, Dream complaining, "Don't, then we'll both have to hear them."

"And who's the one that doesn't want to tell them to stop?"

The blonde threads their fingers together, grinning again, "What do you want me to do, go down there and yell through the door?"

"Yes, please."

A kiss is pressed to his cheek, voice a gentle hum, "C'mon, Georgie."

He rises despite the possibility that he's going to be dragged downstairs, instead being directed towards Dream's desk by hands on his waist. He turns it on as his friend seeks the extra headset,

which is placed over his messy hair. That large hand curls around his hip, leading him back against a solid chest, he works not to let himself tense or relax completely.

A chin hooks over his shoulder, breath hitting his skin warmly, “Now, the extra chair is downstairs, I know you don’t want to go get it. So can you handle sitting on my lap or are you going to be pissy about that too?”

“Shut up, idiot.” Fireworks are going off behind his eyes at the very idea, he fights to act indifferent. The hand on him tightens, pressing for confirmation that it’s okay, he relents, “It’s fine, I can handle it.”

The contact disappears at once with the amused question, “Can you?” It feels more like a half-spoken dirty thought than anything else, maybe George is just being dumb though. He startles out of it by a murmured, “C’mere.”

The blonde is already sitting in his chair, looking up at him with doe eyes, patting only once on his thigh. The older’s head spins, he forces his mind to be blank as he delicately places himself down. He doesn’t want to be a bother, doesn’t want to make Dream uncomfortable, mindful where he sits with some space between them.

It feels that the noise downstairs has become more muted than it should be with just the headphones, he hyper-focuses on the warmth under him that seeps through his pajama pants. One of his friend’s hands reaches for his mouse, the other curving around his waist delicately. A slight tug closer, “Okay?”

A shiver crawls up George’s neck and he stands maybe a bit too quickly, hand slipping off him instantly in caution. He pays it no mind, seeking the soft blanket on the bed that he’d brought up forever ago. It’s his favorite to sleep with, a nice lavender color, always providing the extra warmth he needs in this cold house. The brunette returns to settle on the other’s lap with blanket in hand, laying it over them, finally humming, “Okay.”

Dream scoffs at him slightly, “You don’t even look comfortable, George.” An arm wraps around his middle, words lower, “You know I don’t mind you all over me, you don’t have to be polite. We both know you’re not.”

George’s cheeks flare up instantly in a blush, he smiles a little, “Stop.”

“Mm,” A kiss is pressed right under where the headphones rest, more on the side of his neck than his jaw, “At least move so I can actually scoot my chair in more, can’t reach the keyboard with you on me like this.”

He lets that be his excuse, arm tightening around him when he complies, warmth against his entire back. It’s different somehow than when Dream holds him as they sleep, it puts him to blame for their closeness, he’s not used to it. The music filling his headphones is almost a shock, he’d been too distracted by the stubble brushing his temple to be focusing on the clicks of a mouse.

He assumes that this means neither of them are going to be sleeping for a bit, at least until the noise downstairs quiets. George doesn’t hear it as much as he feels the vibration of words against his skin, moving one side of the headphones away to hum in question. Dream’s arm slides under his and around to reach for his keyboard, “Nothing.”

Still too far, the blonde digs his heels into the ground and shifts the chair forward, the older’s head spinning from the way that means that hips strain against him. Just a few times with each attempt to move them closer to the desk, once and then twice. George is surrounded by the other and the

fabric of their pants has bunched under his ass and over Dream's upper thighs.

It's definitely *a feeling* that runs through him, one he shoves away and uselessly tries to smother. The brunette tries to hide away, resting his head back against the other's shoulder and trying to cover his pink face against stubbled skin. Dream hums, oblivious, "Tired?"

"Sure."

His eyes mindlessly drag over the screen, the way Minecraft has been started without hesitation on what to do. Coziness settles in his bones and he jolts at the sudden pinch on his side, "Patches is scratching at the door."

George smiles at the way her collar jingles as she scurries inside when he opens the door, obviously thrown off by the unfamiliar company and noise. He curls up more sideways on his friend's lap this time, wanting to be out of his way if he wants to play. Their noses bump from him not paying attention and he gets flustered immediately, ducking his head down to press a cheek against the younger's solid shoulder.

There's no comment, the blonde's attention catching on the feline that meows at them. He tilts his head, sympathizing in a gentle voice, "I know, honey." George raises his head to make a comment on the name but Dream chuckles, "Not you, idiot."

He swears the other is trying to give him a heart attack by the end of the night. The very suggestion that Dream would call him a sweet name makes his brain stop working, his words sound almost disappointed because of the break in his filter, "I know."

That earns him another little laugh, hoarse so close to his ear, the blonde launching into a game of bedwars after disguising his skin. Instantly there's a Discord message at him being online, Tommy somehow being awake at this hour. Dream clicks his tongue and George reads that as a firm no, smiling tiredly at the quick answer.

He watches, relaxing into the other's chest properly, warm. He feels muscles tense, furious clicks sounding, the brunette hums along with a line of some song he vaguely recognizes. Then he slides his soft fingers up, curling into the blonde hair on the nape of Dream's neck, trying to wordlessly soothe away the tension, "Did you have any idea about Sap and Karl?"

"Honestly?" Shoulders relax again, head falling down to rest against George's, "I thought something was up with Sap, he was being a bit weird with his phone. But I had no idea it was *that*."

"Really? I didn't catch onto anything at all. I mean, I didn't even know he was.."

Dream gets what he means, the now questionable sexuality of their friend, "Me neither. And then Karl just kissed him out of nowhere, they both know they could've clued us in."

"I don't think either of them even expected it." He pulls his legs up to rest over the armrest, slipping his socked feet under the other's arm so that he's more sideways. He admits quietly, just for the blonde, "I thought Karl just didn't want to see me."

"George." A soft kiss is pressed into his hair, his name leaving the other's mouth like a scold.

"I know," He smiles a little, "I just didn't know what else to think, you know? Did you ever get that feeling before we met?"

"Sometimes," Dream is only half-mindfully playing the game now, "But you know I struggle with



that a lot.”

He does, he does know that all too well from times of hearing crying over calls. His hand tightens momentarily where it'd still been running through blonde locks, “Yeah. I was so nervous to meet you, in a good way. Don't think there was a time where I didn't want to be here with you.”

“And look where you are now.” The smile in those words makes his cheeks go hot, Dream adds a quiet, “Love you, Georgie. Seriously.”

Instantly George lifts his head to brush his lips under the younger's cheekbone, “I'm just glad you're not as much of an idiot as those two.”

He lays his head back down as the other scoffs at his words, “We're going to be stuck third-wheeling the whole two weeks.”

“They're probably so gross together.”

He grins widely at the chuckle he feels the other let out, happy that he made him laugh. George stays that way for many matches as the blonde continues to play, blunt fingernails dragging over Dream's scalp, dozing a bit. Eventually, the music in his headphones stops, making him lift his head tiredly.

They're pulled off gently, he blinks at the monitors that are turned off. He doesn't remember that happening, maybe he was more out of it than he thought. The reflection staring back at him reveals the tender expression on his friend's face, a warm hand slides under his thigh and tugs softly, “Lemme help you to bed.”

George hums, closing his eyes again and trying to curl closer, hiding his face away. He's vaguely aware of a quiet apology before he's being pushed away, arm behind his back curving towards his waist. He misses the warmth but sure hands are moving him until he's got a slim waist between his knees, being held close so they're chest to chest.

His head spins with the way he's so easily lifted, burying his face in a warm shoulder, sighing softly. He lets his fingers find a place in the blonde hair at the nape of the other's neck again, grateful for the hold of a strong arm around him that makes him feel he's not going to fall. George is laid down on soft covers, reminded of being carried to Sapnap's bed while drunk.

This time, though, he latches on. His grasp tightens and he squeezes the other's waist with his legs, not wanting to be taken away from the warmth. Dream huffs in breathless amusement, “Gotta turn off the lights, Georgie.”

His friend's voice is husky from exhaustion, he whines in complaint, “Warm.”

“Just one second,” He promises, large hand pressing on his hip as he forces them to part. In their moment apart George is very aware of the fact that there's no more noise coming from downstairs, relieved to get some good sleep. His ears honing in on any chance of noise other than the two of them makes him get caught off guard.

A waist is back between his thighs, weight on him, warmth pressing against the entirety of his front. George hums, accepting Dream against him like it's second nature, hands rising to bury in his hair. Soft little kisses are pressed up the column of his throat, it's so intimate for a second that he fears even a wrong breath would ruin it. Instead, he lets his breathing even out, falling back into easier sleep this time

Waking up is a bit of an odd experience, warmth on top of him, the sun hitting his eyes and casting

the inside of his eyelids in orange. He furrows his eyebrows, hand rising to shade his vision, still blurry from sleep. Dream has somehow scooted lower in his sleep, cheek against his sternum, one of his hands lying loosely against George's side as if he was holding him at some point in the night.

Patches has curled up between his friend's shoulder blades, making the three of them all stacked together, he smiles with the bizarre want to laugh at the sight. He wants to stay like that forever, sadly the thought is ripped away from him with the hunger that settles in his stomach. George drags gentle fingers through his hair, earning a pleased low hum.

His voice feels raspy, "I'm hungry, Dream." Another hum, more of a complaint in it now, Patches rising to settle next to them instead. He would just ask him to move but he doesn't want to go downstairs and be possibly faced with the awkwardness of the couple alone. The brunette stretches his arms up, stiff from being in the same position all night, "Come with me."

"No." It's a sleepy murmur, hands curving around George's sides to hold him there, the blonde shifting up to bury his nose in the crook of his neck, "Gimme five more minutes."

He doesn't complain but he tightens his legs around his waist, fingers dragging restlessly through his hair. They get caught on knots but he doesn't feel too sorry about it. His blunt fingernails drag white lines down the back of his neck, dipping under his neckline slightly, intent to annoy but not harm.

Dream lets out a long sigh, back falling with it as he releases all the air from his lungs. Then he pushes himself up, scowling down with his eyebrows furrowed, handsome face above George's, "You're actually the worst, you know." He smiles up at him and he rolls his eyes, pushing himself up all the way now, "Fucking brat."

The brunette eyes the sliver of skin that's revealed by the big stretch the other does when he stands, pleased that he got what he wanted. He clicks his tongue to signal to Patches that they're going, their eyes meeting and making him lean down to barely touch the tips of their noses, smiling at her wide eyes. Cold air greets his forearms when he sits up, warmth from under the blankets gone.

He shivers, glad he's wearing socks so he doesn't have to meet the wood floors. Dream is as impatient as ever, eyeing him as he stands, "Hurry up."

"I'm cold," George gives him a scowl, "I'm *adjusting*."

"Adjust faster." Green eyes drift all around the room before he snatches up a piece of clothing, shoving it into his hands, "Here, now c'mon."

The brunette earns himself a lecture when he slides it over his head as they head downstairs, something about falling. He scoffs in response, knowing that if he did fall that he'd end up with a few bruises at most, earning him a kick in the foot when they're safely on flat ground. He perches on the kitchen counter, hooking his ankles together and swinging them as the other starts cooking.

It's unspoken that he would, George thinks that his friend secretly loves to do things for him, he appreciates it. It's a bit odd for them to be eye to eye, the counter giving him added height, he giggles a bit about it. The noise earns him a little smile and he doesn't miss the way the other brushes against him when he passes, it seems that he's learned a bit from Patches.

The smell of scrambled eggs makes the couple emerge from Sappnap's room, Dream's eyes meet George's in silent apprehension, a conversation happening between them in barely a second. Right,

so don't comment. The two giggling in the hallway emerge with fingers tangled together, George looks away with the weird feeling that he's intruding.

But he'd taken note of the hickeys, so many hickeys, he wants to facepalm at their stupidity because it halts their streams. Dream has already plated their food, pressing a dish into their free hands, smile a bit smug as he asks, "Sleep well?"

Sapnap laughs, moving to sit at the kitchen island, "Yeah, actually."

Karl sits next to him with legs tucked underneath himself on the stool, wiggling his fingers at the other two, "You guys look rather domestic this morning."

George has thrown out all sense of caution now, easing, "Something about bonding over our shared traumatic experience last night."

Sapnap scoffs, "Just say you aren't getting any and move on."

"I could. If I wanted." He scowls, accepting the plate that's handed to him.

"Not from that idiot right there," The younger points his fork accusingly at Dream, "He'd rather just keep you in his bed but never make a move."

The blonde's cheeks turn blotchy pink, he dips his head to hide it with the excuse of taking a bite, "Shut up, at least if I got with someone I'd *tell my friends*."

"Not fair," Karl chimes, occupied with his food and not looking up, "We didn't even *know* until I got here, okay? It was weird and now it's just new, there was never anything to tell. Bit odd that you two sleep together though."

Sapnap nods, "I've been third-wheeling since George got here."

Karl giggles, "Yeah, nice hoodie, George."

He looks down at the clothing, mouth open to lie about who it belongs to, stopped by the fact that it's the green one. He scowls, instead occupying himself with eating. Dream's eyes shine with amusement, "Can't believe you just got owned by *Karl*."

George's tongue is sharper than he means it to be, "And you got owned by the fact that you won't fuck me."

Sapnap's laugh is startled and loud behind him from where he sits on the counter, "Damn, George, bitter much?"

He has no response, caught by Dream's stare. He can't tell if there's irritation behind it or not, unsure if he's being glared at or if the other is simply shocked. The older simply clears his throat, going back to eating, feeling the burning eyes on his skin. There's heavy silence that falls over all of them and then Karl does what he does best, lightening the mood with an easy, "We should watch a movie."

George hates the way that the two squish close together on the couch, practically on top of each other, cozy despite the awkwardness of something new. He hates how Dream doesn't make any move to reach for him, doesn't even look at him, an obvious gap between them. He's really fucked up this time, he knows.

He pulls sleeves over his hands, feeling weirdly vulnerable with nobody to lean against, unable to

focus on the movie. Dream's knee is bouncing restlessly in the corner of his vision, the two close together giggling and talking softly about something. He has the weird want to flee, to not face the fact that he's accidentally disrupted their unspoken thing. He just wants the weird distance gone, wants to pass this phase to get back to pretending nothing's happening.

So George does flee, rising without a word to hide away in his stale room. His heart feels like it's bursting in his chest at the possibility of being stopped, he exhales in relief at shutting his door. It's safe, if only for a second, he sits and reaches for his phone so he can have a distraction. Of course, *of course*, he's not allowed more than a moment.

The first thing Dream says after shutting the door behind him firmly, eyebrows furrowed with his racing thoughts, is, "Does it upset you that I haven't fucked you?"

And the only reaction George can have to that bizarre question is a startled laugh, breathless, "Fuck, really caught me off guard with that one."

He doesn't like the space between them when he's sat next to, the blonde tilting his head, inquiring again, "Does it?"

"No," Another disbelieving laugh, "I didn't even mean for it to sound like that earlier, you're my best friend."

"Oh," The relaxation in his shoulders makes George's chest tighten, "Good. I was worried for a second."

"You don't have to worry about that stuff, Dream." He lies, "Now stop being weird."

"I just wonder," He eases against the brunette, forehead pressing against his temple, "If the touch is too much and you get confused that I--"

"I don't." He cuts him off because he knows the words would be too painful, "We're good, we're okay."

"Okay." Dream's voice is suffocatingly soft, tender, "They're both idiots, I guess we have to get better at ignoring it, I figure we're going to get comments a lot. They don't get it."

George nods, knees turning to press against the side of the other's thigh, "We'll figure it out."

# Chapter 11

## Chapter Notes

It feels like I haven't updated this in forever??? I literally made a second google doc for this because it's so fucking long so far. Anyway, what the fuck is basketball? I don't know, I made it vague haha

Enjoy :)

Quackity is a welcome relief from constant time spent with the couple. George feels like a fool while explaining why his room is free to sleep in, all red cheeks and nervous laughter. It's eased by a pinched questioning look and then no further comments, the other simply grateful to be sleeping in a bed instead of the couch.

One of the first things they do together is giggle about nothing until late in the night, the rest of the house silent except the two of them. George hadn't realized how nice it would be to hang out with Quackity, the two of them bouncing off each other like they're used to doing on call. It's a relief that nothing's changed in their dynamic much.

They talk about Karl and Sapnap a bit ("It's weird isn't it?" "I haven't decided yet.") and Patches gets soft coos from the other. She's rather wary of Quackity with his loud laugh and big expressions, favoring George's lap to curl up in.

He knows the other is tired by the way he lays down and his energy deflates, finding his way under the covers with him and making him giggle, "George~"

He rolls his eyes, "What?"

Quackity grins widely, eyes showing his exhaustion from traveling, "I think you're mistaking me for someone else."

"Shut up." He smiles through the pain, "I'm just cold."

The other settles down a bit, laying on his side facing towards him, "Sure, sure."

George feels that he's commonly the victim of poor timing, sharp knuckles hitting the wood of the door before the handle is turning. Dream looks dead on his feet, hair a mess like his hands have been in it, making no real move to enter, "What are you two doing?"

"Making out, obviously." Quackity rolls his eyes.

The brunette turns to smile at him brightly, catching his eyes half-open. Dream speaks again, "I'm going to sleep, just wanted to know when you're coming up? Or are you staying here?"

Green eyes are tracing over the shape of the two of them under the covers together, expression oddly blank. George pushes back the blankets, swinging his legs over the side of the bed to stand, "I'm going right now, Q is tired."

A large hand lands on the small of his back when he's near enough, Dream chiming a bit more

energetically, “Goodnight.”

The brunette turns back, hand swiping over the light switch to bathe the room in darkness, “Sweet dreams, Quackity.”

The first thing they really do as a group, after sleeping all the way through to the afternoon, is go to the park. George is familiar with the benches and curbs, having perched on them to watch Sapnap gain new scars on his knees from attempting tricks. During those times he’s always kept band-aids in his pockets, though they don’t ever mention that fact after.

But the air is pleasantly cool, the orange sky is accompanied by the dirty asphalt of a lone basketball court. His hand is grasped and tugged and Karl leads them through a sloppy rendition of some dance, he’s reluctant to move but only can hide his laughter for so long. He’s spun so easily, like it’s second nature, they don’t even step on each other’s feet after.

Quackity steps in with a “Without me?” So Karl whisks him away and their dancing seems much better than anything George could manage. A warm feeling settles in his chest at the sight, he wraps his arms around himself and rocks back on his heels, quickly being taken back into the dance by Sapnap. He’d dragged along with it by hands that aren’t nearly as uncertain.

They extend a hand to Dream, who’s watching them all in great amusement, the tallest shakes his head, “Can’t dance.”

Sapnap rolls his eyes, “Neither can George.” The oldest ignores that comment, knowing it’s true, and drags his friend into it. The loud cackle the other lets out at all their stumbling makes the embarrassment of dancing worth it, he practically glows in the golden light. George loves him so much it hurts at that moment, fingers squeezing the ones in his.

But he’s gotten a taste now of what portraying that would mean for them, he’d rather stay silent. Hurting himself is better than hurting Dream or their friendship. Sapnap is no help to that, shoving him into the other’s chest with the spoken want to dance with the other two instead. George rolls his eyes, they watch him go while a step apart, “Idiot.”

A hum, soft and happy, and hands find his waist familiarly, “Can’t dance to save my life.” A tug and the brunette giggles, “Let’s do something simpler, okay?”

Of course, George thinks he’d do anything Dream asks him to. They sway together instead, close, smaller hands landing on the taller’s chest. He looks up, at the clouds tinted in what he assumes is pink and orange, at the birds flying together to some unknown destination. And, for once, he feels small.

He’s used to the weight of their lives in the spotlight, the ability to be irrelevant long gone. He’s missed it, he thinks, just existing for himself and his little group of people he cares about. Even if he doesn’t get to have what he wants, if he’s trapped his heart in the deception that this moment means more. Dream speaks quietly, “What are you thinking about?”

“Life. Me. Us. All of it.”

“And your conclusion?” He feels a gaze brush over the side of his face where he’s still looking away.

“I don’t know, I think.. I think I’m just happy.”

When he turns back, eyes are low on his face, on his mouth to watch them form around the words. There’s a moment where Sapnap’s words ring through his head, *I literally watch him consider it*

*every time he looks at you.* But no, Dream's gaze jumps back up to his and it holds so much adoration that George thinks he's gonna implode.

He smiles and his hands rise to cup the back of the other's neck, tugging him down so that their hold becomes more of an embrace. The blonde's hands move as expected, holding him like he's something precious. Once again, he loves him. He's squeezed, almost as if the other knows without him having to speak it aloud.

Because he does, of course, he does. They're broken out of their quiet moment by a palm slamming into the center of George's back, making him stumble and the arms around him tighten securely. He turns his head and Quackity is there to roll his eyes and grin widely at them, "Are we gonna play or what?"

Right, the whole reason they're at the park in the first place, to play basketball apparently. It started as some dumb debate between Dream and Sapnap, resulting in Quackity egging them on and Karl giggling, and now they're here. George doesn't particularly want to play, he hums and smiles anyway, thumb swiping over the back of his friend's neck once lovingly before he lets go.

He misses the hold instantly but shushes his desperate clinginess with the fact that they'll squish close when they sleep later. He's sure disappointment still crosses his face based on the raised eyebrows he's given from Sapnap. George turns away to hide it, eyes training downward and lips pressing together in distaste at his own recognition of the emotion.

Karl smiles, hooking an arm over Sapnap's shoulders and looking up at Dream, "We're going to win easily."

The tallest wrinkles his nose, "Are you sure you two can handle being on a team together?"

Quackity claps his hands together, grinning wickedly, "We'll win, we've got Gogy."

Sapnap tilts his head, like it just crossed his mind, "Our teams are uneven, aren't they?"

George jumps at the opportunity, "I don't want to play anyway, I'll just watch."

Karl's smile turns more private, like an inside joke that doesn't exist between the two of them, "A cheerleader."

He rolls his eyes, "I'll keep score, how 'bout that?"

Sapnap's boney elbow jabs into his arm, "Not fair, you're biased, you'll give Dream and Q more points."

George shoves his arm away, Dream confidently stating, "If anything, he'll give you extra points just so you stand a chance."

He waves off the idea, lips quirked up a bit at the scowl that crosses Sapnap's face, "I won't cheat as long as you don't make me play, promise."

They all exchange looks and Karl shrugs, "Good enough for me."

George takes that as his dismissal, heading towards a picnic table that's perched next to the asphalt, one he's had his eye on since they got here. He sits on the table, straightening his legs out over the bench, comfortable on the metal painted over with dark blue paint.

He pulls out the wrinkles on his pants, picking stray Patches hairs off him, the warm sun hitting the

back of his neck. When he glances upward, he's surprised to see Dream lingering. He's got the ball in his right hand, dribbling mindlessly, the other three arguing on the court behind him. He tilts his head, eyes flashing with mirth, "You sure you don't want to play?"

"I'll just watch." He states again, eyeing the large hand that catches the ball each time with splayed fingers. The sun is hitting the other now, George can't wait until summer hits and he gets to see freckles on cheeks darken further. A part of him scolds himself for liking a guy in basketball shorts, another protests that Dream makes it look good. He raises his hands and shakes them in a little gesture, mimicking pom-poms, "I'm a cheerleader."

The blonde falters for a second, like he's fighting an impulsive thought before he lets it win, eyes tracing somewhere around George's knees, "Where's your skirt then?"

The oldest schools his expression into a scowl, face warming, "I can be a cheerleader without a skirt, you know."

"Can I be your favorite player though?" And an analyzing gaze traces his features, like this is more than a silly conversation.

It's an obvious grasp at validation, echoing, *are you sure I'm not too much?* George smiles softly, fondly, "Of course. Now go kick Sap's ass already, idiot."

Dream smiles brightly, just for him, "No cheating though, okay? No matter how much you wanna see him lose. Gotta know how much I actually beat him by."

It's egotistical but in a way that feels slightly joking, slightly self-aware of it. George nods, agreeing, watching him turn to the others. They're all still arguing and George watches the flex of shoulder blades as the ball is shot. It's from too far away anyway, it's not a big surprise that it's too far to the right, bouncing off the rim of the net and making Karl laugh.

It's a miracle that George's mind doesn't drift too much as they play, he makes up some dumb song in his head that repeats the score over and over so he won't forget. It's also a miracle that gawking at Dream doesn't take away from his ability to remember the points. The sun is dragged down with time, what he assumes is an array of colors change in the sky.

There are no real stars in the city, just tiny specks starting to show, occasionally blocked by light clouds. It's still more than he's ever gotten at home, he tries to trace shapes and lines between them. It makes his eyes droop with weird coziness, it crosses his mind, not for the first time, that Florida is kind of alright in the afternoon. His friends make it better, he thinks, their banter echoing through the mostly empty park.

The first game ends right when the sky is sinking into navy tranquility, George snaps out of his daze to report the score as 12-10. He hopes with all his being that he didn't screw it up when he started paying more attention to the sky. Dream cheers and high-fives Quackity, Sapnap rolling his eyes, "It's because you're freakishly tall."

Karl has a content smile, unbothered by their loss, sitting next to George, "Sure, sure."

They're all sweaty, out of breath from the final point finally scored, Sapnap reaching into his backpack to give them each a water bottle. He even gives one to George, who takes it timidly. Dream sits on his other side, words breathy, the sweet smell of sweat invading George's senses, "That was fun."

Quackity perches next to the blonde, the spot next to Karl obviously saved for their friend, "It was,



actually.”

There’s a glint to Dream’s jaw that the oldest wants to drag his tongue over, wants to taste. Instead he lifts his leg to hook over the other’s knee, simple contact as a hand lands just above his knee, something he’s done a million times before. It goes unacknowledged, the blonde taking a drink before turning to Sapnap, easy words, “You played well, Sap.”

The youngest pulls off his hat, pushing his hair out of his face before he puts it back on, words serious even if his lips pull upwards, “You only say that because you won.”

Karl leans into Sapnap, the quiet statement makes George feel as if he’s intruding by hearing it, “You did good, babe.”

Sapnap kisses him and George looks away, blinking down at his lap and picking at the bottle in his hands with a blunt nail. He hates the envy that burns deep in his stomach. Quackity speaks up, talking to Dream obviously but George still looks up, “We should play another, switch teams.”

The blonde shrugs, hand unmoving from where it’s on the brunette’s leg, “We have all night.”

“I call Sapnap.”

A tongue click and a pinkie spreads out more to rest higher on the inside of George’s thigh, “I dunno, it won’t be fair if it’s two tall people against two short.” Dream turns, shocking him with the sudden eye contact, “You still don’t wanna play?”

He shakes his head no, speechless from the careless touch in front of their friends. He has the odd thought cross his mind that the couple behind him might still be kissing and that makes him feel more awkward. Quackity’s eyes flick between him and Dream, noticing the obviously odd not-quite-platonic thing, “So.. Me with Karl then?”

The blonde nods in agreement, eyes low on George’s face. Then they jump away, up to the ever-darkening sky as he takes another drink. He hates it, the soft outline of the other’s side-profile as he looks onto the empty basketball courts. A lone bird caws somewhere in a tree behind them. George thinks he’s in love, stupidly so.

Quackity jumps up again, adjusting his beanie before he claps his hands together again, a seemingly restless action, “Next game?”

It’s to the other four, George knows, but he nods nonetheless. The warmth on his leg is gone as Dream stands too, stretching his hands above his head. The couple parts from their close sitting, the ball bouncing once on the ground as it’s passed into Karl’s hold. The tallest complains about something and Sapnap rolls his eyes, George vaguely catches his own name in the exchange.

Then Dream reaches a hand up to the back of his neck and the black fabric of his shirt is being pulled up, up, up, until it’s off. George blinks away the sudden light that comes on from the lamppost near their table, casting them all in harsh gold. One glimpse at his friend and his eyes dart away, swallowing thickly and fighting to keep his composure. It’d be deathly embarrassing if he dropped to his knees right then and there, eyes begging to hungrily trail over the waistband that sits lower than needed.

It feels like it’s on purpose, to catch him off guard, to carelessly let the view of his hips be in his desperate sight. It’s not, he knows it’s not, George only knows that whatever god above is *cruel*. He’s seen Dream shirtless before, it was just a bit different, this is more of a choice. He can’t keep his eyes from jumping up when he’s practically leaned over, amused eyes meeting his own

intensely.

Maybe Dream knowing he's hot isn't intentional, maybe distracting George isn't intentional. But what *is* intentional is the sudden closeness under the guise of placing the clothing on the table next to him. The older wants to *bite* him, bruise the smooth color of his neck and hips, and claw at him. He wants to spread his legs and, in his best voice, ask, *please?*

But Dream doesn't like him as more than a friend, he knows that, he's been told. So innocently, just to wipe the self-satisfaction off the other's face, he dips two fingers into his waistband. He burns with pride at the startled look that crosses his friend's face, lips curving up as he tugs the fabric higher. At the expense of covering the sight, he's flustered the other, tilting his face up to smile sweetly. It's innocent, light, "Quit being an idiot."

His fingers linger there, still hooked in the fabric, tops of his fingers against the warm skin. It's sweaty, wet and gross, he doesn't mind much. George pulls the touch away slowly and eyelids flutter before his gaze trains on him darkly. He doesn't know what the other wants when he murmurs, "George."

He tilts his head, playing innocent, not toeing over the line more than he already has. It pushes them back into the boundaries of their odd friendship, putting the decision on Dream, when George asks, "Don't you have a game to play?"

The blonde's jaw sets and the older has a moment where he's truly unsure if the next action will be within bounds. He's nearly turned over where he sits, he can see the twitch of want for it, for hands to wrap around his hips and manhandle him until he's pinned. He gets no such action, just tense eye contact for a long uncertain second. Karl's voice cutting in breaks them out of it, "Uh.. guys?"

They've been minutes too long to avoid suspicion, Dream's gaze clears instantly, he turns and smiles crookedly, "Sorry, George pulled me into a conversation." The tension is gone in an instant, normal Dream in all his friendliness is back, turning to him again, "You're keeping score?"

George nods, feeling that he's lost his footing on the previous power he held. Lips brush over his cheek and the mumbled words breathed against his skin send shivers up his spine, *good boy*. Fuck, George is a dead man. He's absolutely done for when they're alone together later. Again, the thought of begging crosses his mind.

But the warmth of Dream is gone from him, he's all easy smiles as he turns back around. Like nothing has gone on at all. He's a good actor, George notes, much better than he is with his rosy cheeks. He does keep count, mouth dry as he watches the new sweat drip down the curves of Dream's back. He wishes he could save himself and look away, having to watch to keep score.

He's damned, burning up, knee bouncing. It's a win for Sapnap and Dream by a landslide, of course, because they play much more. And they're more competitive based on their cocky grins as they sit again. The blonde next to him boasts about being undefeated, hand wordlessly curving around George's waist to tug him in.

He'd much prefer it be on his thigh, slipped under the hem of the sweater pulled down to cover him more, near where he feels he's too warm. He's so out of it that he almost misses the fact that Quackity is talking to him, happily oblivious, "You should play in the next game, George."

"We should," He was going to say *be on the same team* but his mind switches around and his horny brain won't shut up, "Go out drinking tonight." Yeah, he can work with that, "I'm bored of being in the house."

Karl tugs his sleeve, he turns to look, "We're all gross."

Sapnap counters that, "We can go back to the house and change, get an Uber so Dream can drink too."

Dream hums in agreement over the idea, "Sounds good."

George dies a bit when they're all stuffed in the car, the blonde in the middle despite being the tallest. Karl and Sapnap being there mean they get the front seats, Quackity unfortunately stuck with the two of them. Their thighs press together, it's a relief that the drive is short. Still, fingers sneak to brush over his hip, blunt nails dragging over the skin. He wants to whine, tilting his head back. The movement begs *more*.

He gets nothing else, the touch gone in a flash. It's an odd scramble to get ready when they arrive home, there's really no need to rush. George has half the mind to get absolutely wasted, to be careless and stupid. Another reason that he can safely relieve the tension in his body with someone random. That would be preferable, to be taken home.

Which means he aims to look good, putting more effort into it in the time the others shower. He misses the stare of Quackity as he ruffles his hair in the mirror, misses the information turning in the other's head as he puts on final touches. He's got a lip gloss tube in hand, a transparent one that tastes good, leaning towards the mirror when his name is spoken, "George?"

The younger has just been lounging and watching him get ready, scrolling through his phone as he rests on his bed. He sits up more now, apparently ready to talk. George ignores all the signs, opening his mouth to put a thin layer of gloss on, humming in answer.

"How come you never mentioned that you and Dream are together?"

"We're not." He furrows his eyebrows, meeting his friend's eyes in the mirror.

"I thought-" Quackity seems uncertain of this conversation, "I thought it was a big joke, you know? I thought Sapnap was exaggerating and that you two played into it to be funny. But you're like *a thing* thing."

"No, we're not." George turns to look at him properly, frowning, "We're nothing."

"George." It's stated almost like a plea, "There's a time where you need to be honest with yourself."

The older looks to the closed door before he sits next to his friend, "Look, I'm not lying when I say we're nothing, alright? I never said that I don't *want* to be something, it's just.. I'm being friend-zoned hard here, alright?"

"*Friend-zoned*? Are you kidding me?" Quackity looks at him like he's said something bizarre, "That man is head over heels for you, idiot, how are you being friend-zoned?"

George puts his hands up in exasperation, "That's what Sapnap says too. I don't get it, I thought for a bit that he was into me, right? And then we had a weird talk to assure that I didn't think he liked me, meanwhile he's acting like *this*."

The younger's expression softens, he sits up more, "Have you considered the fact that he might be scared? Fuck, George, you came here all the way from London. Maybe he just doesn't want to lose you."

“I thought I made it clear that he won’t.” There’s a somber silence that falls over them. Then George sighs, admits, “I just want to forget about it for tonight.”

Quackity nods, “Then do that.”

Of course, it’s only Sapnap that would open the door without knocking, looking between them quizzically at their expressions. Maybe he seems to get it, tilting his head and asking quietly, “Ready to go?”

George gives Quackity a thankful little smile, “Of course.”

He’s squished once again next to Dream, who’s put on some heady cologne that sits heavy on his tongue. He trains his eyes out the window to watch the lights of the city pass instead of focusing on every point of contact between them. George is warm, too warm, and it’s a relief to stumble out of the car. At least they weren’t recognized by the driver.

It reminds him of college to be in with the moving bodies and gross smells and blinding lights. Maybe it makes him feel a bit old. They do shots, 3 done by each of them, before they get lost in it all. George is glad to get away, to get lost, to be desired openly for once.

It’s easy to find someone, his hair and eyes dark, gazes meeting heavily. It’s nearly an accident that they did but George can’t help being glad anyway. It’s new hands, new lips, on him than he’s used to. He’s glad, appreciating the heavy grinding and sharp features. He just wants to get lost in someone that’s nothing like Dream, not so desperate to seek light hair and green eyes.

He doesn’t care then, with alcohol in his system, happy to be dragged away. He doesn’t care for burning eyes on his back, only the fingers pressing into the flesh of his hips with no shame. And when he kisses the stranger, he doesn’t care that it’s not who he truly wants.

## Chapter 12

### Chapter Notes

Incredibly quick update somehow? I did not know what else to add so sorry that it's short

Enjoy :)

He hates his dependency on his friend for sleep, can't even rest until morning in foreign sheets before slipping away. No, he's forced the humiliation of leaving in the night, when the stranger has drifted away into sleep. Must be nice, he huffs as he tugs on his shoes.

His muscles protest, screaming for him to go back to tossing and turning. But no, home has a greater pull than stubbornness. He just doesn't think he feels good in general, alcoholic courage fading into an ache in his temples. He wants a shower and pain pills and Dream.

George wonders briefly if he'll be turned away due to the dark marks sucked onto his skin. He hadn't had the heart or the mind to ask that no marks be made in highly visual spots. No, he's stuck with hickeys from what now feels like the wrong man. He's an idiot, the moon taunts him as he waits for his ride.

He pays the driver no mind other than a raspy *thank you* as he goes. That's one thing he likes, that the transition of money is digital and he's not forced to scramble for his money while feeling sick. George hates the guilt that eats at him, like he owes Dream anything at all. If Dream has no claim on him then why does he feel like he *cheated*?

He feels like a filthy cheater, his mouth tastes like someone else. It's all wrong, the wrong tongue swiping over his lips to taste the lip gloss he had on. His hands shake as he unlocks the door, mind racing. If it weren't for the headache he's got, he would've turned around and sat outside at the first notice of a thump upstairs.

It's in steady repetition, unmistakable for what it is. George squeezes his eyes shut, not believing that the one time he really needs Dream that he's inaccessible. He decides to focus on his need for something to ease his aches instead of the lump in his throat, feet starting towards the kitchen again.

The water is a refreshing cold as he washes down the medicine, a pain sits dormant low in his throat from the previous strain in his voice. Indeed, he got what he wanted, he forgot for a while. His room is empty when he peeks his head in, Quackity must be out with someone too. It's a relief not to be interrogated or agitate his vocal cords more.

He grabs soft clothes to change into, taking a warm shower to ease the aches in his muscles. The pills should kick in anytime now. George observes the purple marks left on him, bruises from sharp teeth and a rough hold. The ones from the man's fingers are the worst, an ugly yellow accompanies the dark circles.

He whimpers at the pain in his scalp from his hair being pulled, washing carefully. Alright, he admits, maybe he took on more than he could handle. He doesn't regret that, he definitely wanted

and liked it, but he can't help but feel he could've gotten better. His chest feels hollow with the want to exchange this for a gentle touch.

George feels better after he's clean, like the filth of a stranger isn't on his skin anymore. He wants Dream, he aches again. In his long shower, the noise had at some point stopped, but the front door had never opened. He knows *whoever* is still up there, he knows that he's going to be alone for a while.

He sighs, no longer in much pain, laying out under his blankets. Twitter is boring, he can't even show that he's active out of fear that one of his friends here in Florida will notice. *Poor George, couldn't even get laid properly on the one night they go out.* He huffs, curling up on his side and wanting to be held.

The thought crosses his mind that he's more upset than he wants to let himself admit, he writhes in denial of that. The universe relents for once and gives mercy, he drifts in and out of consciousness for a while. It's good, hours, body so exhausted that it refuses to submit to the restlessness of his mind.

He jolts awake from this odd slumber at the shake of the front door closing, rubbing his eyes tiredly. But still, he doesn't know if that was the person leaving or Quackity getting home. He turns over onto his stomach, letting out a long breath, waiting for any sign to point his mind towards either.

Nothing, the house is silent. George grasps uselessly for his phone, being blinded by the brightness, squinting at the time. His eternity of sleep turned out to be five hours, it's still dark outside. The cold comes that only lingers in early mornings, he shivers and curses Quackity for not having an extra blanket in the room.

He stands shakily, mouth dry, the taste of the stranger even heavier after sleep. His throat hurts. He's glad to see that his closet is untouched, thumbing through to the far corner to snatch up purple fabric. It doesn't even smell like Dream anymore. Stretching his arms up to put it on is an unwelcome strain, his lips fall into a frown.

Patches has tipped over the glass he'd left out, as she often does, a bit of water spilling onto the counter. Also an unwelcome pain, he cleans it. The faucet feels too loud in the silence, a jingle sounding along with it before smooth fur brushes his ankle. She blinks at him in the dim light and his lips twitch, "Hi, Patchy."

George's voice is hoarse and the feline goes back to restlessly rubbing against his legs. He downs a full glass of water, chasing the soothing cold in his throat. Patches suddenly flicks her head to the right, towards the front door, and light barely hits the window. *They're still outside.*

He doesn't know why he does it, crossing swiftly to drag the curtains to the side, looking out. The light was headlights, he barely sees her as she gets in the car. But it strikes him that she's gorgeous, even after sleeping in a foreign place, disheveled but unbelievably fine. Of course, George's chest tightens, he lets the curtains fall shut again.

She's all glossy red lips and burgundy dress and he's no more than a mess. What does he have to offer if Dream's seeking people like *that*? He rubs his hands over his eyes and Patches meows again. But his mind stresses the fact that Dream is now alone, accessible just up the stairs. He hates his hesitance, his momentary lack of ability to act like they're friends.

*This*, a negative part of himself calls, *is why you've never had a partner before.* Right, the whole jealousy act. He's a mess, the finger of his failures prods into his chest painfully. Patches helps

drag in his stumbling thoughts, stretching and using his leg to steady herself, she blinks at him. George bends, wincing, scratching under her chin and admitting, "I love him, you know."

She purrs, leaning into the touch.

He continues, "I wish I could tell him sometimes. Or most of the time. What should I do?"

She provides no reaction, no mystical answers he's seeking, oblivious to the weight of his words. George envies her. He clicks his tongue, hating that when he does slide under familiar covers that they'll be tainted by another person's warmth. On *his* side of the bed, a shiver runs through him that's not a result of the cold. His stomach turns again.

Maybe it's just the rude awakening that the domestic front that he allowed himself to believe, and he sure did believe, is just a sham. It's a lie he's told to himself and it hurts. Part of himself doesn't even want to go upstairs, wants to deny that someone else was in bed with Dream, but another reasons that he's absolutely exhausted.

He hadn't slept well in the many hours he was drifting in and out of consciousness. It just felt restless, like a way to pass time faster until he could seek what he needs. He has that ability now, staring blankly at Patches as she rubs back and forth against his knees. He's still crouched on the floor, frozen, lost in thought and the sinking in his stomach.

George rises, knees cracking as he does, rubbing his numb nose with his sleeve. The soft material makes a new wave of craving for his friend hit him, he yawns. His muscles protest desperately as he makes his way up the stairs, not liking the strain that the action causes. He ignores it, tired and somewhat upset.

He wants to forget about it all for tonight, just like he always ignores his little crises. George knocks as he always does, pausing for a second just in case, before entering. It's dark and his eyes instantly pause on skin revealed from blankets fallen down, Dream hadn't even stirred at the sound of the door opening.

The blonde is sprawled out on his stomach, the comforter bunched near the curve of his waist, back flexed from his arms being spread out. It's like he's trying to take up as much space as possible, George nearly huffs in amusement. He would if it weren't for the angry lines down the other's skin, dark bruises similar to his own scattered among freckles.

He shoves away the new rush of emotions at that, simply wanting sleep. There's no extra warmth to be found on his side, it must've disappeared in his time spent thinking, it's a relief. His plan is to slide against the other's side without waking him and simply fall asleep. It's no good, when he slides under Dream's arm, he shifts. The younger turns his head, practically rumbling out, "George?"

His shoulder is warm when George presses his face against it, curving into his side so easily. He ignores the eyes squinting at him through the darkness, "Go back to sleep, idiot."

Of course he can see his stupid smile in the dim light, eyes adjusted from being downstairs. Dream hums, tugging him close, the bare skin of George's knee instinctively meeting the other's thigh. The touch of their skin without any cloth in the way makes his stomach flip, his friend sounds amused, "I'm naked, you know."

"I don't care." He states stubbornly, not wanting to leave despite the awkwardness of it, not when sleep is within his grasp.

Dream moves, George catching his bruised chest before the blanket is pulled up more. His heart is in his throat at the hand that grasps him under his knee, pulling him closer in a move only dismissible by the other being half-asleep. A thumb swipes against his skin, tugging his leg up so the soft inside of his thigh is against his friend's waist, "Are you naked under that?"

George's brain is stuttering and his tongue feels heavy. He swallows, mouth feeling dry again, he gets out a feeble, "No."

A large palm runs up the back of his thigh, grasping his shorts and tugging on them gently, almost loving about it. The older presses close against his warm chest, the heavy scent of sleep against his skin, head tucked under his chin. The hem of his shorts is still being rubbed between two fingertips, almost mindlessly, "When'd you get home?"

The brunette keeps his voice soft, still hoarse, "A while ago."

A hum before the touch is gone, he's told quietly to look away. He does, training his eyes upwards towards the ceiling he's familiar with, warmth of the other gone. It's only for a quick second before the bed dips next to him again, he looks to see a chest left bare. He can't really complain.

It's all fine, they're set to sleep now, when Dream's hands grasp his waist. It's obviously to turn him so that he can be spooned, a common occurrence with his friend who has the habit of moving him where he wants him. Which George doesn't mind usually, he actually kind of likes it. But this time he's got bruises in the spot, instantly jolting at the sharp unexpected pain, crying out.

Hands instantly release him, hovering with the want to help with whatever's wrong. The brunette hates that his eyes have clouded with the ache, which has returned from the unknowingly firm hold. But George soothes Dream's worried expression, hand sliding up his bicep to grab his shoulder, touch reassuring. But his friend's emotion doesn't clear, he asks, "Let me see?"

And George has the sudden dread for that, no will to deny him, knowing he *should* let him see. He nods, giving confirmation that it's okay, hand tightening where it rests. It's obvious that he has hickies, that he's been with someone, but he knows the bruises are going to earn him a lecture. His chest tightens with gratitude at the cautious hands that lift the fabric of the hoodie.

His shorts are decently small, revealing the marks on his thighs already, but his hips are a different story. The cold air hits his skin and he feels vulnerable as a sharp gaze finds the purple and yellow fingerprints. Dream exhales, breathless, "Oh, George.."

Which makes him feel that the stranger he'd been with is instantly villainized, he grasps for the words to fix that, "He didn't do anything I didn't want him to."

"But this?" Fingers brush over his waistband before hooking in, tugging down to reveal more, a different feeling in it than what George had done to him. The brunette hates the sharp inhale that comes, it's so obvious in the bruises how he'd been held, even with the hickies that confuse the five clear marks on either side. Dream's mouth tilts down, "There's a way to do this stuff right, George. This is not okay."

Those words awaken a weird wave of anger in him, "I don't think that's your call to make. It was my choice." Their gazes meet flatly and George squeezes his shoulder, a bite still in his words, referring to the scratches, "And that's okay?"

"I'm *sorry*," Dream's eyebrows furrow, "Guess I just shouldn't worry about you being in pain. Quit getting mad at me." He softens, eyes squinting a bit in sincerity, "Just want you to be okay."



“That’s not your job.” George turns over onto his side away from him, just wanting to sleep already. He tugs the purple fabric back over his exposed skin harshly, sending another trickle of pain under his skin.

“George, are you hearing yourself, why are you being such a bitch?”

His eyes water again, he wipes them to fight off the feeling, voice weak, “I just want to go to sleep, okay?”

“Hey.” A hand catches one of his, it’s more genuine, “I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have called you that.”

“I know that, you fucking dickhead.” But his words have lost their venom now, deflating with his exhaustion.

Dream scoffs, the bed dips more behind him as he settles down, fingers still running over smaller ones. He buries his nose in brunette curls, breath hitting George’s neck, “You’re so tired, aren’t you? Have you slept at all?”

“No.” He admits, turning tiredly into his friend’s touch more. The blonde’s hand releases his, dipping down to pull the covers over him as if sensing that he’s cold. His large warm touch falls to hover over his chest before he splays his fingers there lightly, body sinking against his back like it’s the most natural thing. It practically is at this point.

It’s a bit odd not to feel another layer of clothing between them, cotton of sweatpants meeting his legs and the fabric of the hoodie meeting the other’s chest. In a way it makes a new coziness settle in his chest, he’s compliant to the squeeze that urges him closer. His eyes flutter shut instantly and he drifts off with mumbled words against his skin, “Get some sleep, honey.”

George wakes up very sore, twisting and turning as if he can escape it. A hand passes through his hair and he’s shushed softly, vaguely aware of heat on his skin. No, not just heat, skin against his. He blinks in the daylight that feels too bright, looking down to figure out why, finding that the hoodie has come up.

His stomach flips at the hand against his skin too, the culprit of why his clothing has lifted, touch slid underneath to rest on his back. The bruises are revealed, there to see and lecture him about, but the steady rise and fall of Dream’s chest tell him he’s got nothing to worry about.

He doesn’t know how he’d managed to turn around in his sleep with how tangled together they are, a knee between his own warmly. He’s effectively trapped and Dream doesn’t seem like he plans on releasing him anytime either, he huffs into his chest. Purple marks greet him just inches from his face, venturing up the column of his throat as well as down past his waistband.

They’re darker than what he’d seen what he assumes was hours ago, he can’t even imagine how much of a mess his own skin looks. It’s an odd disconnect in his mind, that they’ve slept in the same bed but with marks from other people. Again, there’s a fear that runs through him at the thought of addressing it with the other only to most likely be shut down.

Friends, they’re friends. Friends who share a bed and clothes and can’t keep their hands off each other. George can do this, he can cope with this, at least until this weird thing that Dream’s got going on fades away. At least he hopes it will at some point, because he can’t stay this way forever without cracking.

The hand on his back shifts, sliding down to rest on the small of his back, gentle. The words are spoken huskily into his hair, “You’re waking me up with all your thinking.”

“Sorry,” He burns with the remembrance of his irritation before they went to sleep, letting his remorse for that sink into the word too. Then he complains, soft skin of his thigh brushing up to feel the other’s leg enveloped in sweatpants, “What else am I supposed to do? You’re holding me hostage.”

It’s ignored, mostly because it’s not a genuine complaint, Dream’s attention is more on his action. He doesn’t lift his hand to touch, simply dragging it down over the side of his body carefully, to wrap around his thigh. What he’s given in return is, “I like you in shorts, you should sleep in them more.”

“Why?”

His thumb finds a purple mark, brushing over it, “I dunno.” Then his palm is flat on his back again, warm, “You okay?”

“No.” George shifts away a little with his newly given freedom, “I’m sore.”

“Probably because of those bruises,” Dream jumps on the opportunity to comment, of course. The brunette makes a noise in complaint at that and gets an amused huff in return. His friend’s eyes are lit with adoration, he leans to press his lips to a sensitive spot on the crook of George’s shoulder, loving, “I’ll go get you something for it, okay?”

*It’s not even your problem*, he bites back the words. But then his mind fearfully states that if he’s left alone that he’s going to crumble, that they’ll have to address anything at all. He catches a half-risen Dream by the shoulder, tight, heart in throat. It screams *don’t go, don’t leave me alone*.

“George,” It’s said knowingly, the blonde’s lips tilt upwards a little, “I’ve gotta go downstairs and I don’t know how to carry you without you getting hurt.”

“I can walk.” It’s stubborn.

“No,” Dream’s tone flattens in the finality of that answer. Then he softens again, “I’ll be back in just a second, okay?”

No, not okay. George nods, chest tight, lying, “Okay.”

## Chapter 13

### Chapter Notes

Another quickish update. If you read the updated tags, there's a bit of smut in this, which really wasn't planned. I mean, I planned on writing smut for this eventually but yeah, surprise haha

I haven't written smut in a while and I'm very much asexual sooo yeah, enjoy I guess

He doesn't crumble, at least not in any obvious way. The painkillers are heaven-sent, the two fumble from how quick he snatches them up from the presented open palm. For a bit they lounge, he tucks his head under the other's chin without much hesitance. Then fingers brush the hair off his forehead and he's asked, "Are you feeling better now?"

"Kind of." He admits.

"C'mon," Hands wrap around his biceps as Dream rises, "I'll run you a bath."

George hasn't taken a bath yet in the house, much less ever bathed in the blonde's bathroom. It's smaller than his and Sapnap's, just across the hall. He manages the distance, watching the temperature be set and felt. It feels odd to be taken care of, he craves it on a greater scale.

A towel is grabbed for him, Dream practically mindless as he does all these things, like it's second nature, "You're okay to get in by yourself?" He nods, figuring he can manage the step over the side. The water is turned off, he feels the steam coming off it, those green eyes don't even turn to him. It's a hum, "And you're okay by yourself?"

This, he hesitates on. Because no, he really doesn't want to be left alone, he's feeling extra clingy today. Eyes land on him at his silence, expression quizzical. George rushes to answer, realizing he's making it weird, "Yeah, I'm okay."

Dream's lips press into a line, "I can stay if you want, I don't mind."

"You don't?" A shake of his head in answer and the brunette relents, "I.. Yeah, I want you to stay. If you will."

"Of course, Georgie." Fingers brush lightly over his arm, comforting, "I'll look away, promise. I'll stay."

Which is enough, the awkwardness is definitely there as he undresses though. Eyes are turned away from him, he rushes out of his clothes just to end the weird silence. The step over into the water makes his legs tremble but he manages, the water hot but not too hot. As soon as he's lowered in, he sighs in relief.

He feels so embarrassingly exposed but Dream keeps good on his promise not to look at all. His friend sits near the bathtub, within reach, facing the opposite direction. It's the only way he could sit without looking and without directly facing a wall. George has the weird desire to *ask* him to look at him, he smothers the very thought.

He lets the heat loosen his muscles, relaxing, and it's just one beat of silence before Dream is talking. He goes on about some random Minecraft mechanic he's figuring out, a new coding project, hands gesturing like it's so exciting. George appreciates the effort to fill the air with noise, watching each tilt of his head and the smile in voice.

Then a laugh bubbles up in his chest and the younger pauses, head moving like he had the intention to turn before stopping himself. It's a mindful little remembrance, a desperation not to mess up. The smile fills his words more and George loves being able to tell that it's there, "What?"

He hums, shrugging, moving closer to rest his chin against the side of the tub. He's nearly in the other's ear, "Nothing."

Another minimal turn of Dream's head before he stops, blonde hair nearly tickling his nose, "What's so funny about Redstone?"

"Nothing." *I love you.* The feeling curves into every word, making his lips loose too, "You can turn, it's okay, you can hardly see anything anyway."

Instead, the other stiffens, "You sure?" George hums his confirmation, gracing him with a smile when their eyes meet. Green eyes reflect that warm light of the ceiling, tracing momentarily over his smooth collarbones before jumping back up. A crooked smile, "Why are you looking at me like that?"

He lifts one shoulder before letting it drop in a half-shrug. Then he raises a hand out of the water to brush soft fingertips over Dream's cupid's bow, admiring the gentle pink of his lips, "You know, you seemed less nervous about Karl and Quackity seeing you than me seeing you."

"That's because you're you." His frail wrist is grabbed gently with a large hand, that delicate pink brushing over each fingertip in a soft kiss, "And are you kidding? I was pacing while you were drinking with Sap."

"You could've joined us." George's eyes dance around his face and he dares to add, "I never understand how you get nervous, you're good-looking."

"Am I now?" His lips turn up into a flimsy smirk.

"Yes." He blinks back, "You are."

Dream's expression turns more earnest and he leans to press a kiss to his cheek, "You're sweet. *You're cute.*"

George curves a hand around the nape of his neck to keep him close, teasing, "Great thing to say when I'm literally naked in front of you, Dream."

"I can't even see anything, shut up, idiot."

"And you'd have to be looking to know that."

"George," A thumb presses against the corner of his mouth, "You literally slept with me half-naked last night. *And* you stuck your fingers in my shorts."

"To *pull them up*," He smiles, "And I was tired, I didn't wear it for you."

"I know.. Hey," Dream tugs his face up a bit more like he feels that he's not paying attention, allowing them to make eye contact easier, "I'm sorry for calling you that last night, seriously."

“It’s okay, I guess I was being pretty aggressive. Probably deserved it.” He blinks up at him, mind haywire from the hold on his face.

Dream furrows his eyebrows, “I made you cry.”

“I was just tired, promise. I know you didn’t mean it.” Which he *does* know that, he wouldn’t brush it off otherwise. He tucks his chin down to kiss his palm, “Make it up to me, come wash my hair.”

Dream clicks his tongue, eyes trailing all over his face to double-check that it really is okay. It’s seemingly determined that it is because soon enough he’s being instructed to wet his hair. He does as told, turning with his back to the other, and nearly moans at the relief of shampoo being lathered into his hair.

His hands half-rise and he hums, eyes fluttering shut, “Careful, ‘m sore there too.”

The blonde’s hands slow and soften their movements, more careful not to tug, “I can’t believe you let him do this to you. I saw you leave with him, seemed like you could do better.”

George tries not to think too hard into those words, “Just wanted a quick fuck, you know?” A hum and he continues, “I saw why you left with her though, pretty.”

The movements falter, “You saw her?”

“When she left.” He admits, “Just when she was outside because the headlights scared Patches.”

“Oh.” There’s somehow relief in the word, hands continue. This feels like dangerous territory now, more than two friends talking about their hookups, especially when Dream murmurs, “You’re literally the prettiest, George, and you talk about her like you’re not.”

“That’s different.” He turns his head so their eyes meet, “I’m a bit different than a one-nightstand.”

The blonde’s lips turn upwards somewhat humorlessly, “Right.”

Which, George doesn’t know if he means it in a *because we’re friends* way or a *we could be together* way. Let Dream take those words however he wants, he doesn’t care. But still, he questions, “Dream?” A hum, George’s eyes trace the wall in front of him, back still turned, “I love you, you know.”

“I *do* know.” The man behind him reassures.

The brunette’s eyes flutter shut again, “Good, I feel like I don’t say it enough.”

“You do, George, just without saying the actual words.” A kiss is pressed to his shoulder and he’s honored that the other would risk soap in his mouth for the action, “Now rinse, pretty boy.”

He complies and Dream leaves him with the promise to be back with clothes. He gets to wash his body with soap that smells like the other, it makes his head spin a bit. Then he dries after wobbly steps out of the bathtub, unplugging it to let it drain. He wraps the towel around himself, feeling cold and exposed.

George goes to leave to find his friend, nearly running into his chest in the process, feeling bare with his flushed skin for the other to see. Dream isn’t subtle at all with the once-over he’s given, being checked out and feeling wildly vulnerable. *Just do something*, everything in him screams for the moment to pass or progress.

Then the blonde blinks out of his trance, lifting the clothes in his hand, cheeks pink, “Are you okay with wearing mine? Think Quackity’s still asleep.” He nods, watching a large hand rise as if to touch him before it’s retracted. A quiet, breathless, “Okay.” Eyes then jump to his, Dream flushes pink again, “Sorry, I didn’t- I don’t want to make you uncomfortable.”

“It’s okay.” George takes the clothes from his hands delicately, a bit teasing, “Nice to know I could do better.”

The other looks like he wants to absolutely jump his bones, eyes darkening. He falters then steps close, fingers dipping snugly into the towel around his waist, a tug closer and a low voice in his ear, “You have *no* idea.”

George thinks he’s going to die on the spot, heart racing. Is this what Dream felt like when he did nearly the same thing at the park? He wants to whimper, turn his head as an offer for space to be marked with those sharp canines.

And then Dream is turning rather jerkily on his heel, leaving the bathroom like he has to force himself to take each step forward. He calls back with a loose gesture of his hand, closing the door behind him, voice normal again, “I’m going to go make breakfast, come down when you’re dressed.”

George takes a long minute just standing there, water droplets still falling from his hair. Then he goes scarlet, mind playing over the low voice in his ear. *You have no idea*. Fuck, what the fuck does that mean? He’s so screwed, he shakes his head, and then Dream’s voice going back so easily?

*What the fuck?* His hopeless thoughts call again. He looks at the clothes in his hands, the way they practically scream the message of *mine*. His brain twists around the previous tone and he practically shivers with the imagined, *Mine, you’re mine, George*.

Yes, yes he is, he’ll be whatever Dream wants as long as he uses that tone again. He’s standing there, frozen, *so* so hard in the middle of his best friend’s bathroom. Again, *what the fuck?* He shakes away the thoughts momentarily, wanting to get changed and forget it all.

Wrong, he doesn’t forget, hand sliding down. He steadies himself with a hand on the counter, shivering at the imagined, *pretty boy*. Anything for Dream, he’ll do anything at all. He could be walked in on at any moment but can he really be blamed? A drop of water trails down his nose and drips onto the granite, he trains his attention on it, hand still frozen low on his stomach.

No. No, he shouldn’t. George lifts his head to make eye contact with himself in the mirror, scoffing at what he sees, shaking his head to himself. He scolds himself, *not now*. Then he grasps the clothes left discarded on the counter next to his hand, pulling them on shakily.

The boxer briefs aren’t as loose as they probably should be on him, he covers his shame hurriedly with sweatpants. Doesn’t help much, he pulls the t-shirt over his head and tugs it down. He aches, practically pleading for his body to just be done after the night before.

*No*, his cock twitches, *Mine, George, you’re mine. You have no idea*. He does, he whimpers, he does have an idea. His shaky hand is venturing down again against his will, he pleads for the other to come back. He tugs the shirt up and the rational part of himself says it’s wrong to do it in the other’s clothes.

He pulls the bottom of the shirt up, tucking it between his teeth to prevent himself from swearing. Again, he steadies himself against the counter with his right hand, using his left to push the

sweatpants and boxers down, freeing himself. *Fuck, he's hard.* It feels dirty and clumsy when he opens his mouth, shirt falling free and covering himself again, to spit in his hand.

George tucks it back into his mouth, biting down hard, eyes rolling back at his own touch. *Fuck*, he can't believe he came only last night, it feels like decades ago. It's desperate, the left hand around his shaft that makes its way slickly up to thumb over his tip. He hasn't touched himself in so long, not since he's been in Florida, not daring to while having roommates.

But it's natural the way he twists his wrist, rhythm quick to try to finish before he's caught. It's good, too good, he rocks his hips forward each time to sloppily meet his own hand. His mind fills with that low voice, right in his ear, practically purring, *pretty boy*. He whines around the fabric in his mouth, eyelids fluttering in the rush of pleasure that comes from the thought.

He's dirty, the encouraging part of his mind hisses, touching himself sinfully in Dream's bathroom. *What would he do if he found you*, his mind is full of those large hands. He looks spent and used already, those thick fingers probably wouldn't even hesitate to press into him. He cries out at the very thought, trembling.

The shirt does its job of muffling the noise nearly completely, the bathroom fan doing the rest of the work to cover up his moment of weakness. He's practically drooling, praying that the other will sense his neediness. *Bet he'd make sure everyone knows you're his*, his imagination taunts him.

It's that thought that sends him over the edge, eyes rolling back and jaw clenching around the fabric. He's a whimpering mess, spilling over his own fist, hips jerking and stuttering forward. He sees stars, entire body feeling warm and absolutely boneless. He slumps forward, the hand on the counter now sweaty but still supporting him.

His knees feel like jelly, he's nearly panting as he lets the shirt drop out of his mouth again. It's a bit shameful to clean himself up, rethinking all his fantasies and the logical part of himself taking over to point out how they wouldn't happen. It's also a bit shameful how fast he came, insulting himself with the thought that he'd last less time under Dream's hands.

He takes a minute for his legs to feel steady again, clothed fully once again, looking at himself in the mirror to see if it appears that nothing happened. His entire face is pink, the color ventures even lower than the neckline that leaves his collarbones uncovered. The dark bruises taunt him with the fact that they're from someone else.

George scoffs, at his distaste for himself and his mistake of a one-night stand and that he just did what he did. He can forget about it. Yeah, he can forget about it. He's honestly a bit surprised that he makes it down the stairs okay, sore as well as still shaky. Patches jumps from where she's lounging on the couch to trail next to his legs, he winces as he bends to pet her.

Apparently, he's the last out of their rooms, everyone sat at the table and chatting idly. Dream's lips curve up happily when his eyes land on him, gaze trailing down over him just once to take in the oversized clothes. Then the blonde rises, hand brushing his waist faintly as he passes, "Sit, I'll make your plate."

George doesn't feel like arguing, sitting in the untaken seat next to Quackity. Three sets of eyes train on him with an air of amusement, he's elbowed by the man next to him, "Wild night?"

He rolls his eyes, thanking Dream when the plate is set in front of him before continuing, "Could say the same to you."

Karl points his fork at him and then the tallest, "I dunno, seems like you two got pretty crazy from

the looks of it.”

Instantly George’s hand rises to cover his neck, eyes wide, “Oh, no, this isn’t from him. And his aren’t from me.”

Sapnap shrugs, going back to eating, eyes trained down, “Well, what were we supposed to think? You’re in his clothes and you two came from his room.”

Quackity elbows him again and annoyance shoots through him due to the pain, “Who even sleeps together after hooking up with other people?”

Dream shrugs, taking a sip of water, “Us, I guess.”

Karl is the nicest once again, tone light, “It makes sense, I was wondering who was up so early in the morning, that explains it then.”

George rolls his eyes, “Wow, thanks for caring and getting up to check.”

“Well,” Karl squares his shoulders, “I didn’t know if it was one of you or not, didn’t want to make someone uncomfortable. Did you need to be checked on?”

The blonde’s eyes train on him intently at that but George simply smiles and shakes his head, “No, I was fine, I was just tired.”

Sapnap finally looks up, tilting his head, “You could’ve come in and slept with us if you didn’t want to be alone.”

“I didn’t want to intrude.”

Sapnap rolls his eyes, “That’s why you knock first, dumbass.”

Karl smiles kindly at him, “We don’t mind.”

George nods, finally taking a bite of his pancakes, knowing that he most likely will never do that. But he appreciates that the two care, of course. Quackity elbows him again and he drives his own elbow back in retaliation, the other rubs his arm where he hit, “You guys are all saps.”

Dream smiles, pointing to the youngest and connecting, “Sapnap.”

George giggles and Karl joins in, the younger’s hand connecting with his partner’s and letting sarcasm leak into his voice, “Good one, Dream.”

The bottom lip covered in that pink he adores sticks out in a pout, George just wants to kiss him dumb. Quackity turns and takes one look at George’s face before he breaks out in a fit of giggles as well. It’s the oldest’s turn to elbow him, making sure to do it forcefully as payback, only making him laugh more.

He ducks his head to focus on his food instead, forcing his obvious expression off his face. It’s not anybody’s business anyway, the extent of their relationship is personal business. It especially feels so with the way that Dream has still mastered the ability to act like nothing was said. Still, George spends all morning laughing.



## Chapter 14

### Chapter Notes

Ayyy new chapter ft. relationship talks and lots of casual intimacy

Also! A bit of Karl being asexual stuff. There's barely any good ace rep on ao3, at least it feels like it.

It's not "don't touch me uwu" shit, okay? That's literally not what being ace is haha

Anyway, enjoy as usual

They decide to go swimming, the weather very sunny but with a slight breeze. George has the thought that the wind will make him cold later but he brushes it off for the experience of swimming with his friends. Quackity has only been in Florida for a full day, this marking the start of the second, Karl on his fourth day.

It's nice, despite streaming being done very sparingly. It makes him feel like the visit is an actual visit instead of a business opportunity, which it *is* just a bunch of friends visiting. No cooking stream yet, the abundance of hickeys on any or all of them have continuously halted it. They have time, 10 more days of time together.

The pool is clean and blue, he dips his feet into it. Then he's called, with green eyes shining down at him, "C'mere, Georgie."

Quackity picks up the nickname immediately, squealing, "Oh *Georgie!*"

The oldest turns with a threatening gaze which says obviously that *not for you, don't call me that*. He gets a giggle in return but he knows the other got the message clearly. George rises to see why he's being called, stopping in front of him and blinking up at him expectantly. A crooked grin and a hand grasps him rather harshly to force his chin up, "Quit being so grumpy, just wanted to know if you wanted the sunscreen."

"Of course I do." He attempts to be stubborn about it but he softens against his will at the touch, being released.

A tilt of Dream's head, "You need help putting it on?" George fixes him with a flat look and his smile turns more caring, voice quieting a little, "Seriously, do you? I know you're sore, I can help."

The others can't hear them and the brunette fixes him with a look, smile peeking through without his permission, "Any chance to get your hands on me, huh?"

A laugh, a bit breathy, lower, "Shut up, idiot, answer the damn question."

"No, I don't." He takes the bottle from his hand gently, their gazes meeting unwaveringly, caught in each other for a moment more. Then he turns away, putting it on by himself.

His head rises only when Sapnap calls, "George. We drinking?"

"Didn't we do enough yesterday?" George tilts his head back in complaint before deadpanning,

“But yeah, we are.”

A cheer and his answer somehow earns Karl a kiss, making him turn away. George settles down on the concrete around the pool while his sunscreen dries, lifting his head only to accept the cold drink he’s handed. He’s got his legs straight in front of him, leaned back on one hand, basking in the nice weather.

He’s swimming in a shirt again, which covers part of the problem, and his swimsuit ends just right above his knee. He tugs them down a bit more in an attempt to further cover a bruise on the inside of his knee, not that he thinks any of his friends would really judge him anyway.

Quackity has already jumped in, disregarding any sun protection on his skin, looking happy as he holds onto the edge of the pool. He’s also got a beer in hand, forearms on the cement in front of George, he’s smiling. Karl sits next to him, with a drink as well, mimicking his position.

They watch as Dream and Sapnap argue and fumble to blow up the floaties, murmuring back and forth to each other like two irritated dads on a summer day. But a smile graces their faces sometimes when they stand shoulder to shoulder and their conversation eases away from their task. Karl bumps George’s shoulder with his own, “Look at our men, so handsome.”

The older grins, taking a drink, eyes trailing over them, “I dunno, are they?”

Another shoulder bump, “So you admit that he *is* your man?”

Quackity is just looking back and forth between the two, listening in. Not that either of them minds anyway. George shakes his head, “He’s not.”

Karl’s eyes go from Sapnap to Dream and then finally to George, “He looks at you like he is.”

Quackity chimes in, “Look, Karl, they’re both big simps and are getting nowhere.”

Raised eyebrows, “And you know that how?”

George answers, “I told him.”

Quackity continues on, not letting Karl respond, “What even happened last night, dude? And this morning?”

“We,” He tilts his head before quieting his voice, picking at the label of his beer in that damn nervous habit, “We got in a fight last night, I guess. The guy I left with was rough and Dream didn’t like that and I.. I cried. And then we slept, that’s it.”

“You cried?” Karl’s voice is soft, caring, lacking any teasing tone.

George rubs his eye, “I don’t know, I was a mess, I was so sleep-deprived. I got mad and then he got mad too, it was whatever.”

Karl’s hand finds his and squeezes reassuringly. Quackity lets there be a warm pause before he questions, “And this morning?”

“He was.. He was so sweet, ya know? I mean, he always is, he’s so fucking good to me but especially so when we woke up. And he held me all morning and we- well, *I* took a bath and he apologized.”

“We?” Karl giggles and takes a drink.

George feels warmth cover his cheeks, “Well, yeah. He stayed, I wanted him to.”

Quackity rests his chin on his fist, looking up at him, musing, “You guys are so cute together.”

He waves that off with a shake of his head and drinks, eyes drifting to Dream. He traces the slope of his shoulders and the giggles leaving his mouth in response to Sapnap’s smile before he tears his eyes away. George clears his throat, squeezing Karl’s hand still in his, “So, you still haven’t told us anything about you and Sap.”

The other giggles immediately, almost giddy about it, gushing, “It’s so amazing, he’s great.”

Quackity hums, “None of us had any warning, how did it even happen?”

George smiles, “Q’s asking all the right questions.”

The shorter shrugs, “I’m the single one, I’m just here for the drama.”

Karl is still smiling widely, answering, “I guess it kinda just happened? I mean, we met those few times in person and it was just natural. We talked a bit on call, about feelings and all that, and it was really intense for a while until I got here.”

“Intense?”

“We didn’t know how to go about it, really. And I was dumb and I started avoiding him, which made him think that I didn’t like him. I was just scared, you know? That my stupid ace brain wouldn’t let me be with him that way because he was different.”

George tilts his head, “Like, a guy?”

“Yeah. I knew I was mostly indifferent but I wasn’t sure if it’d change because of that. And I liked him so much too.”

“But it worked out,” Their eyes meet and Karl’s are shiny just from the thought of being unable to be sexually attracted to his partner. George reassures, “Even if you couldn’t give him that, he wouldn’t have cared. He liked- *likes* you, he’s known that you’re asexual.”

“Yeah, I know.” Karl’s eyes leave his when he turns to take a drink, he admits after, “I guess I kinda got stuck in my head.”

Quackity finally chimes in again, “Well, you could’ve talked to us about it.”

“About what?” Sapnap’s approached at the sight of his partner becoming emotional, eyes glued to him.

Karl smiles, patting the spot next to him, “Nothing, baby. Just us getting together.”

Sapnap does sit, crossing his legs and hooking an arm around the other’s waist, “Everything’s okay?”

“Mhm,” Karl leans into his shoulder, “I was talking about being ace.”

Those eyes are still worried, “Do we need to talk?”

“No, promise.”

George looks away at the eye contact that portrays a private conversation, seeing Quackity with his

eyes already turned away. Karl still has his hand in an iron grip, he pulls it away gently before rising to his feet. Dream is muttering to himself as he fumbles with an innertube, eyes trained down as he attaches it to the air pump.

The brunette soothes a gentle hand down his arm, the frustrated gaze softening as it rises to him. He tilts his head, "Who's the grumpy one now?"

"Still you." Dream ducks his head down to press a kiss into his hair, "What were you guys talking about over there? Sap left so suddenly."

George sets down his beer and picks up the three floaties already inflated, two innertubes and a big flamingo, putting them into the pool. He admits, "Relationships."

"Oh yeah?" Those eyes are trained down to the task again.

"Yeah," George's lips tilt upward at the mischievous thought to continue, "I was giving a steamy retelling of my night."

An odd look crosses Dream's face, that blank one he saw once before, eyes flick back up to his and back down, "Oh."

George rolls his eyes, "I'm kidding, idiot." He smiles and jokes, "I hardly remember it well enough to do that."

And the blonde picks up on his tone better this time, shaking his head disapprovingly at his words. Large hands are still fumbling to connect the innertube, George huffs in annoyance. He snatches it away, doing it easily and offering it back. Dream just looks at it for a second before he scowls, "You're so annoying."

"So what, you gonna do something about it?"

It's cheeky, he knows, especially with the dark look he's given. He giggles and that earns him another head shake, the hiss of the air pump apparent as the floatie inflates. Dream speaks over it, "What *did* you talk about, really?"

"We did talk about relationships." He considers if he should reveal that he talked a bit about the two of them, "About Karl and Sap getting together. And us."

The last part is said quieter than the rest, unsure if that's okay. Dream doesn't even react, "Oh, is that why Sap left?"

"Karl got emotional." George watches the air pump be turned off, nozzle of the innertube being closed.

Dream presses on the floatie to make sure it's inflated enough before extending it to him, tilting his head, "And what about us?"

George throws that into the pool too, turning back and connecting the next and final innertube, "Well, about last night. This morning too."

The loud sound of the air pump fills the air again and Dream simply nods. The brunette looks back towards the other three, surprised to see them all in the pool already. Sapnap sticks his tongue out at him, hands reaching towards the big flamingo floatie, their eyes meeting accidentally.

George simply smiles, picking back up his forgotten half-empty beer. The stopping of the sound

makes him turn his head back to Dream, he watches his hands work to close the nozzle, “Are you drinking today?”

“Maybe a little bit.” He admits, tossing the innertube toward the pool lazily. Then he turns back, “Are you swimming in your shirt today?”

“Yeah,” He hums, then asks, “Why?”

“I’m still trying to decide if I should.”

George considers him, eyes venturing over his hickey-covered neck and remembering the scratches on his shoulders, “What I can see they can’t?”

Dream’s lips curve into that crooked smile, “Exactly, looks like you’ve got a brain in that pretty little head of yours.” The brunette sticks his lip out and is rewarded with, “C’mon, you know I’m kidding.”

“Ew, look at you, actually apologizing?”

“I never said sorry.”

George smiles up at him, poking a finger into his chest and claiming, “You’ve gone soft.”

His beer is plucked out of his hand instantly, being set down, and he’s so invested in what the other has in mind that he doesn’t protest. But then arms lift him like he’s nothing, he yelps in surprise. Seems that Dream has found a way to carry him without hurting him, an arm under his back and his knees.

George clings to him, “Don’t drop me, I swear Dream if you-“

He’s shushed and gets carried to the edge of the pool. Dream has the decency to ask, “You have your phone on you?”

He shakes his head and Quackity calls, “Drop him, Dream!”

Other cheers make the blonde’s grin widen, George tightens his grip, nails digging a bit into the nape of his friend’s neck, “Don’t you dare drop me.”

“I won’t.” A kiss is pressed softly against the very corner of his mouth. George is stunned, thoughts stuttering, and he doesn’t even have time to yell before Dream jumps. As soon as they fall under the surface, he’s released to swim up. He pushes his hair off his forehead and Dream is there to grin at him, “That’s for pulling me into the ocean.”

George sputters, splashing him, “That was like three months ago, you jerk!”

Dream simply smiles and shrugs. The five of them lounge for a while, laying about and enjoying the sun. Then the idea of playing games arrives and their competitive sides win over, including some very intense arguments between Sapnap and Dream. Again, George remembers with the help of being aware of new company that the two fight a lot.

They make up some time while working together to make lunch, making sandwiches alone in the house together, coming back laughing. George was right about the wind making him cold, getting out and wrapping a towel around his shoulders, shivering. His cheeks still burn faintly, the effects of the sun despite sunscreen.

He accepts the sandwich happily, maybe a bit unsteady on his feet from drinking. It'd been hard to tell while swimming, the heat making it hit him harder, he catches Dream's wrist before he goes to get his own sandwich. Maybe George is taking advantage of the other being a sap for him but that's nobody's business.

He *totally* asked for the other to get him water because his balance is off, *definitely* not to see if he'll comply. The cold water bottle pressed into his hand makes his dehydration hit him, he downs half of it immediately. Dream grins down at him teasingly before sitting on the ground in front of him, "Okay?"

George nods, perched in a chair like a normal person. The ground is covered by the large umbrella he'd worked with Karl to get open, he doesn't comment. He simply sets his water bottle down, ruffling the messy blonde hair that's still darker from being wet. Dream had sat out to dry off a while ago with the intention of making the food, he presses his cheek against George's damp knee.

They all eat wordlessly, the only noise being the music that'd been put on earlier. George is still shivering, goosebumps rising across his skin, towel now too wet to provide any help. He gets rid of it, instead sliding out of his seat to press close into Dream's side, who's as warm as he expected. He gets a hum, simply pressing his nose into the crook of the blonde's neck, arm sliding around his shoulders warmly. His friend muses into his ear, "You need something?"

"I'm cold," George digs his fingers into his side for the tone, adding, "Idiot."

Dream jolts at the feeling, large hand wrapping around the one in question to prevent a repeat of it. Amusement curves even more so through his words, "Somebody likes me, huh?"

"No," The brunette lifts his head from the warm spot, blinking up at him, "I literally hate you, totally despise you."

"Mm," Dream presses a kiss to his cheek, "We literally sleep together, Georgie."

"You're so unbearable that it keeps me awake otherwise," He smiles, their faces close, "You're the only warm thing in the entire house."

"Excuses, excuses." The blonde's lips tilt up to match his own, "Maybe you just like being my little spoon."

"That too." George presses his face into the crook of his neck again.

Dream laughs at him admitting defeat, the vibration racking through both of them, their fingers slide together to interlock. They're squeezed gently, a silent communication that the other likes being his big spoon. George smiles wider in response, squeezing back and getting a thumb swiping across his knuckles in return.

The pool feels cold again when they get back in, George goes down the stairs one step before he sits, water up to his waist. He swings his legs and watches Dream and Sapnap grapple into yet another fight. At least this one is more lighthearted, splashes and laughing. He smiles at the sound.

Then Sapnap shoves Dream back and pokes his shoulder hard, lips curling up, "You know what?"

The blonde narrowly moves out of the way of a slap, stopping the shorter with hands on his wrists, "What?"

Sapnap tries to free himself, splashing, "Chicken fight, I'm gonna kick your ass."

Dream shoves him back, laughing already at the idea, “We can’t even fight properly, you’re not strong enough to lift anyone.”

“Team effort.” Raised eyebrows, “It still counts. And I am, I can lift George.”

“No way, he’s on my team.” Green eyes land on him where he sits, “Right?”

George rolls his eyes, “Only because I don’t wanna be on Sapnap’s team.”

“You’re so annoying,” Sapnap shakes his head, though isn’t discouraged, “Fine, me and Karl versus you two. Couple fight.”

Dream looks to him for confirmation and he nods, being approached as Karl and Sapnap start talking amongst themselves. The blonde’s hands half-reach for him, extended but not touching, asking, “Is that alright?”

“Yeah.” George twists their fingers together, tugging him forward a bit, “We’ll win, we’re taller together than they are.”

“True.” Dream brushes a soft thumb over his skin, lowering his voice, “But I meant are you okay to do this? Still sore?”

He scoffs, “You worry too much, I’m fine. I’m used to this, it’s nothing new.”

“I’m sorry, I just never..” One shoulder raises and then drops, “I guess I’m not used to you being with people.”

“You don’t have to be *used* to it,” George pulls away his hands to smooth over the line between Dream’s eyebrows, “Just stop worrying so much about me, I can handle myself.”

“Am I..” The line is back the instant his touch is gone, “Too much? I’m crossing boundaries.”

George’s fingers seek it again, rubbing carefully over it and then down his straight nose before finally resting on a gentle cupid’s bow. Eyelids flutter at the touch and he murmurs, “You’re okay. It’s sweet that you worry, just.. I’ll let you know if I need something, ‘kay?”

Large hands wrap around his bent elbows, tugging him close, nose pressing against the curve of his jaw. It’s an embrace, one that leaves George’s arms trapped helplessly between them. Dream just hums softly, tenderly, “Okay, George.”

The words make him feel that he’s in *way* over his head with this definitely-barely-platonic-now thing. *Quit*, the scared part of him calls, *call it off*. No, he loves and he loves and he’ll love until he dies. He lets them have it for a moment longer before he pushes gently, “They’re waiting for us.”

He hopes that portrays his reluctance to part enough. Arms secure themselves around him properly and Dream turns back to see the couple patiently waiting. It surprises him the way that Sapnap seems unbothered, maybe the moment was apparent. Instead, they get a mindful, “Ready?”

George nods for both of them, it’s no surprise that it’s easy to slip onto Dream’s shoulders. There *is* a strain in his thighs and hips but he pays it no mind, focusing instead on his balance. Large hands land on his thighs to keep him more steady, his mind spins with the touch and the head between his legs. Not really the moment for those thoughts, he scolds himself.

Still, his fingers find tangled blonde hair, Dream tilting his head back into the touch. Their eyes meet and he strokes his fingers instead over freckles on stubbled skin. The smile he’s rewarded

with is everything, he squeezes his legs just slightly and the blonde presses his head back against him harder. Eyes have darkened by the time he lifts it again, lips brushing faintly over the inside of George's knee against the bruise there, *mine*.

George nods to himself, *yours*. But Sapnap and Karl are ready and he has to snap out of it, blinking up to see his best friend's stupid face. He grins back, calling, "You're going down."

Sapnap laughs a bit breathlessly, "Why the fuck are you guys so tall?"

They do end up winning for that reason, it's difficult to shove him back because of the height advantage despite his strength disadvantage. Sapnap breaks the surface looking like an angry wet cat, bristling already at having lost. George feels lightheaded from laughing at the sight, bracing himself against Dream's shoulder.

He misses the wince from his grip, blinking laughing tears out of his eyes. Sapnap frowns, "Rematch, double or nothing, you got lucky."

Dream's hands flex on George's thighs, making him realize his tight hold on scratched skin and release him quickly, "Just say you're bad and move on."

Sapnap rolls his eyes, "Rematch, you fucker."

George flips him off, "This proves you're the inferior couple, no way."

"Scared you'll lose?" Karl cuts in with a giggle.

Dream rolls his eyes, "Fine, rematch, you're on."

"And we'll just win again." George grins, actually quite surprised and happy about his victory. He ignores the continuous label of couple. *Couple*? And Dream doesn't even flinch at the word, it falls from his mouth like it's nothing, George struggles to get it out in the same way. It's definitely a joking-haha-couple thing. Right? Fuck.

They win again and he takes the first opportunity to get off Dream's shoulders. His hips and lower back ache, he's out of breath from the fight, he practically slumps into warm open arms. He knows the other senses his discomfort and he burns with a little bit of pride when no worried comment comes.

Fingers dip softly under the hem of his shirt, brushing lightly over where he's bruised, careful not to hurt him. George sighs, their foreheads meeting and noses hitting on accident, curving his own fingers around his cheek. He presses his thumb against the corner of his mouth, unable to get the dumb grin off his face.

Then the touch under his shirt is gone, hand rising to tug him into his side gently. Dream pulls their faces away, breaking their little celebration, extending a hand to Sapnap. He simply says, "Brother."

And Sapnap moves to be crushed into their hug as well, his head knocking George's. They all laugh at that, squished close. Then Dream shoves the youngest away, ruffling his hair, still laughing a bit, "Okay, Q's turn."

Quackity, who'd been laid out on the flamingo floatie sleepily after lunch, lifts his head at the mention of his name. It honestly looks comfortable, the sun probably warming him up. He lifts the sunglasses that have been perched on his face since they came outside, "What?"



Dream grins, “Chicken fight, you and me.”

He wrinkles his nose, letting the sunglasses fall back down, laying back again, “Play with George.”

“I did. You don’t wanna beat Sapnap?”

A long sigh before Quackity gets up, yawning.

## Chapter 15

### Chapter Notes

Progress, some progress. Is it good progress? I'm not even sure yet, that's for future me to think through.

Anywayyyyy, enjoy, smut in this chapter

The afternoon brings time in the hot tub, the first time George has even gotten in it. It soothes his muscles, he leans his head back and closes his eyes. It brings the cute moment from earlier when Sapnap and Dream had been barbecuing, the two had been standing shoulder to shoulder. It seems to be that they stand close often, brotherly in their bickering.

But at some moment, a break in time from flipping the burgers, Karl had sought Sapnap. Which means downright grabbing his ass shamelessly. Well, maybe not shamelessly, but it hadn't been discreet either. It'd caught Dream's eye as it'd caught all of theirs, and he'd wrinkled his nose cutely at George. Which is a dumb moment to remember hours later, the expression imprinted into his memory.

Why is he so *cute*? Fuck. And he'd murmured a joke about it into his ear later too, a joke about pulling a Karl and grabbing his ass. Which had sent sparks in George's mind because he's not quite sure how he'd feel about that. *Yes*, obviously but also he thinks he'd pass away on the spot, so *no*.

A hand lays over his and pulls him out of his mind, he opens his eyes. Quackity smiles at him, obviously doing it just to bother him while his thoughts are elsewhere. George rolls his eyes and smiles back, pulling his hand away like the touch offends him. It's a show, just to earn giggles in return. He's pulled in with an arm around his shoulder, bare skin meeting his own.

That's another thing, with the absence of sun there'd been no excuse for wearing his shirt. Dream had pulled his own off over his head as the sun was setting, it'd stuck to him and was dragged over his skin. The memory alone leaves George's mouth dry, he flicks his eyes over to the man in question to see eyes already trained on him.

Again, that blank look. If George studies him enough he sees the look trained on Quackity's arm around him. It hits him like a slap to the face, *jealousy*. The look is jealousy. He blinks away his surprise about that, dipping his chin down a bit to draw those sharp eyes up to his. He smiles, communicating silently, *obvious much*? Which is a lie because it was very much not obvious apparently.

He gets nothing back, just a gaze dipping low again and a tongue brushing over a sharp canine behind parted lips. George is indeed exposed, marked skin on display despite his initial reservations toward the idea, it feels good to swim without a shirt for once. He'd tugged up his shorts a bit to hide his bruises more, never getting more from the others than a fleeting quizzical look.

George huffs at the response, leaning into Quackity more, leaving Dream as the only one in his own corner. Karl and Sapnap are nearly pressed close enough to be on top of each other, a tangle of

limbs, falling together naturally and talking quietly. Quackity's lips nearly brush his ear as he goes into a random fit of giggles before whispering, "Dream looks like he wants to murder me."

"And?" George keeps his voice just as quiet, "You're annoying anyway."

"Jerk," He's nudged hard, "Go over there and blow him or something, jeez, with your pitiful little--"

George elbows him, sending him into a loud laugh, cheeks burning from more than his sunburn, "You're a menace."

"Go, go," Quackity withdraws his arm, "Before he gets too jealous, the possessive fucker."

George hisses back, "He's *not*."

A finger jabs into his chest, right on a bruise, making him wince. Quackity's lips are curving up wickedly, "Like you don't like that he is." The statement makes his cheeks burn again and he gets an eye roll, "Go."

George feels like he's lost this conversation, doing as told but not before giving him a dirty look. Right, Dream's hands find him as soon as he's within reach, splaying on his ribcage. The feeling of their skin with no fabric between them makes all thoughts leave his head, their eyes meet.

Then the blonde's eyes trail down, over his mouth and then the curve of his jaw, lower to study him properly. They linger over his marked neck before finding smooth collarbones and then down to his chest more, over pale skin. Dream looks like he wants to eat him alive, eyelids drooping when his gaze rises once again.

George remembers how to move then, squishing close against his side, peering up at him to see warm light hit his face. The shine in his eyes reminds him of the basketball court, wet hair stuck to his forehead, he's all soft angles. The way that Dream looks at him makes him think that he's not alone in being in love, he's a star.

A gentle thumb rises to brush the drops of water on his face, lips curving upwards, "Hey."

George tilts his head up to brush lips over the other's ear, voice low, "Quackity thinks you get jealous of people touching me, hm?"

"Touching you," Dream chuckles, "Who's touching you?"

"Smooth cover-up, idiot." George giggles back to him.

"Idiot this, idiot that, you're so mean to me."

"It's like," He slides their fingers together and squeezes, "A pet name at this point, like honey or something."

"Like darling?" Dream asks and George hums, the taller squeezes his fingers again, "Can I call you that?"

The brunette rolls his eyes, "You're so sweet sometimes I feel like you're messing with me."

"George." Dream smiles and it curves up his name fondly.

"You can call me whatever you want, idiot." George wrinkles his nose at the kiss on his cheek he gets in return, "You're gross, I'm gonna go sit with--"

“No, no, I’ll stop,” Dream laughs in his ear and it sounds so brightly happy that George dies inside a bit.

He stays, drawing his legs up onto the bench and bathing in the warmth of both the water and his friend. *Friend?* Friend. Maybe he stares a bit, tracing soft freckled skin and being envious of the woman who was allowed to kiss it. At least the scratches aren’t deep enough to scar, her memory will eventually fade. George realizes that maybe he’s a bit possessive too.

Their eyes meet in their mutual wandering, Dream smiles, looking up and speaking loud enough for the others to hear him, “I wish we could see the stars.”

Sapnap rolls his eyes, “Karl is literally right here-“

“Shut up, dumbass.” He huffs back. His gaze is still upwards and George follows it, being met with the porch roof. There are potted plants hanging on the edge, swaying just barely with the wind, spider plants if the leaves over the pots are anything to go by. He wonders briefly who takes care of them because none of them ever seem to go in the backyard.

Peace rushes over him as he watches them move, barely illuminated from the dim porch lights. A ring of a phone from inside jolts him out of it, he doesn’t recognize it as his own so he doesn’t move, The Cure blasting the tune of Boys Don’t Cry. Dream, on the other hand, snaps his head toward the sliding glass door longingly.

Then his warmth is pulled from George’s side, he stands and hurriedly steps down the steps of the hot tub to head inside. Dream nearly slips as he does so, grabbing a towel and trying to hurriedly dry so he doesn’t drip water on the floors. It’s futile, the ringtone halts. The blonde swears, heading inside despite still being wet, a startled Patches fleeing away from the door.

Dream arrives back in the doorway after a moment, a dazed smile on his face as he holds his phone to his ear, hair still dripping wet, “My mom was calling.” The towel, with its bright colors, is draped around his neck. He pulls the corner absentmindedly as he stands, eyes cast down as he waits, face softening. His smile widens, exclaiming happily, “Ma! I barely missed the call, almost cracked my skull open in my hurry.” His expression softens even more, “Yeah, of course I missed you, mom.”

When he turns away is when George pulls his eyes from him, Sapnap smiles, “Mama’s boy.”

“Like you’re any better,” Karl pokes him.

George looks back over to the blonde, who’s pacing mindlessly as he’s talked to, humming occasionally. His smile remains as he chews his nail, he pulls it away, “Of course she can, any time, you know that.” It drops a bit, “Well, uh, actually.. The guys are here, so you know. But if that’s still okay with you, I guess I can kick Alex to the couch.”

He furrows his eyebrows as he listens to his mother talk, the four also listening in now.

Dream hums, “Yeah, ma, of course you’ll meet them first. Dri can have the guestroom, there’s a lock on the door and all if she wants.” Another pause, “No, they won’t take it personally, they understand.”

George catches his eyes, his pacing halts. Eyes trail all over his face, still more focused on listening to what’s being said.

Dream starts back up his pacing, “Yeah, okay, sounds good.” A tiny pause, “See you tomorrow, mom, get some sleep. Love you too. Bye.”

Quackity beats the other three to asking, "I'm sleeping on the couch?"

George ignores him and asks, "Your mother is coming over tomorrow?"

Dream sets his phone on a table and wraps his towel around him properly, "Drista wants to stay over and I guess my mom is kinda getting tired of her asking." He starts drying off, "So, yes and yes. She gets the room, she should get a safe space while in a house full of men. My mom is iffy about it, obviously."

Karl comments, "So many people in one house."

The blonde nods in agreement. George watches him dry his hair and asks, "You're going inside?"

"I'm tired."

Sapnap stands, "Maybe we should all go in and chill, maybe play a game?"

Quackity chimes, "I'm gonna kick your ass at Mariokart."

George shakes his head and protests, "That's my job."

An extended hand, "We'll team."

He shakes it in agreement, it's a bit ridiculous but he doesn't care. As they all dry, shivering in the cold, Dream goes around picking up. The house is a welcome warm, three turning down the hall and two heading upstairs. George had left his clothes from earlier, *Dream's* clothes, in his room. He'll just put those back on, he decides.

It slips his mind that he's exposed until Dream clicks the door shut behind him firmly and corners him against it. No comment on the position, on trapping him and leaning down, simply raised eyebrows, "What are you changing into?"

"What I wore earlier," George replies meekly, blinking up at him. He suddenly feels too warm.

Eyes dip low, trailing over his skin and jumping from mark to mark. Then Dream hums, low, using the door to push himself away. The brunette's mouth is dry, he still feels warm as the clothes in question are pressed into his hands. A murmured, "Go," and a hand too low on his back pushes him away to change.

He sucks in sharp air as soon as the bathroom door is shut behind him, catching his splotchy cheeks in the mirror. George's heart is in his throat, he presses a hand to it and becomes aware of the blush that has spread down to his chest. He's so obvious, he knows he is. He splashes cold water on his face and changes into warm clothes.

Dream still doesn't have a shirt on when he returns, sweatpants unfairly low, tapping away on his phone. A thought crosses George's mind and he speaks it aloud to get rid of his mental fog, "I can't believe your mom is going to see me while I'm covered in hickies, what can I even do?"

He seeks a sweater, cold from outside still lingering on his fingertips, too late to notice before hands land lightly on his hips. The blonde murmurs, "I don't know, it's not like I particularly enjoy looking at them either."

The nerve to say it comes from somewhere between hung clothes, light enough to almost be passed off as a joke, "You could cover them up."

Not a joke, very much not a joke. He's tugged back and a nose trails lightly down his neck, breath hitting his skin, "Don't say things you don't mean."

Oh. *Oh*. Why is it kind of working out? George clutches a random sleeve tightly, tilting his head back and encouraging, "You can. I don't mind."

He complies with the hands that move him, a firm one grabbing his jaw and harshly tugging his head to the side more. The other rests low on his stomach, almost low enough for fingertips to be under his waistband. Dream says simply, "George."

His eyes flutter shut and it's nearly just a plea, "Dream."

The first time Dream places his mouth on him properly is with a hard bite on his neck, right on a particularly bad bruise. He gasps and practically sinks back into the other's body, grip faltering on the fabric. Then his fingers scramble up to tangle in blonde hair, lips brush over the mark once before trailing hotly down to cover the next.

George doesn't know how his knees don't buckle when the hand on his face slides around his throat instead, covering it easily, thick fingers pressing in lightly. Dream's mouth is at the crook of his neck, sucking a new purple mark there and probably many more. Not that George is complaining, nearly whining, the large hand on his stomach pulling him back.

It's a disappointment for Dream to pull away, sharp canines scraping once over his skin before he's guiding both of them back. They're pulled out of the safety of the closet, George's plans for grabbing a sweater completely forgotten. He's pushed, the edge of the bed hitting the backs of his knees and making him fall back.

Their eyes meet intently, unwavering, like a challenge. But Dream softens, looking down at the shining wet spit on his neck. The hand that rolls the hem of his shirt between index and thumb is almost shy, much less careless, "Are you going to let me cover some of the other ones too?"

George wishes he'd kiss him. He blinks, opens his mouth, struggling before he breathes, "Yes. God, yes, Dream, please."

Instantly the fabric is pushed up, warm lips back onto his skin without hesitation. Teeth sink once again into his skin, over his collarbones, and he couldn't stop his back from arching if he tried. Hands cover his waist, securing him against the sheets firmly, a sharp nip in scolding. The noise that leaves George's mouth is pathetic, half a whine at staying still and half a whimper about being held down.

Dream is leaned over him, gaze jumping from the fresh blemishes forming up to his flushed face at the noise. He almost looks smug about it. Another noise leaves George's mouth, just as pathetic, and his hand finds blonde strands once again. Dream doesn't seem to have any protests to being guided back to his mission.

The kisses down his sternum are more sweet, soft pecks before nipping at his lower stomach. Then eyes train themselves up again, waiting with lips hovering above his skin for a sign. When George doesn't understand, he asks lowly, "What about the bruises on your hips?"

The brunette shivers at that husky voice, giving up on appearing as if he's unaffected. He's very obviously hard in his sweatpants, there's no point anyway. A bit of impatience rises in him, "Fuck, Dream, just- just do whatever you want." He gets furrowed eyebrows in return and George squirms, "You get what I mean."

Just one other little pause in consideration and then the blonde dips his head back down. A little kiss is placed on every fingertip-sized bruise before George tugs his hair, barely able to see the way eyelids flutter. More intent now, a tongue drags over the v of his hips before lips drag back down. Another glance up to be sure and George tries to arch into it, held still with the squeeze of large hands.

Dream hums, nudging at his waistband with his nose to place a kiss there. The brunette is done with waiting to be touched, hooking his leg over the other's shoulder. Dream doesn't need to be told twice, hands trailing down from his waist to hook into both his sweats and boxers. George wishes he wasn't as far gone just from kissing as he is, it's painfully apparent when the fabric is pulled down.

Dream doesn't even hesitate, not with the older's insistent noises, tongue dragging up over the underside of his cock to taste the precum there. George's head falls back against the bed for the first time, forcing him away from the sight, a loud moan leaving his open mouth. Fuck, he's embarrassingly close already.

The blonde's hand wraps around his shaft, twisting as he sinks down just once before pulling off. He mouths his way back down to his moving hand, like he's fucking worshipping him or something. George's hand is tight in his hair, hips shifting forward against his will, thighs shaking.

Dream doesn't even seem to mind how close he is, bobbing his head like it's second nature, tongue dragging over the underside of his cock. When he comes back up he digs his tongue into his slit, making George's back arch so good. He hollows his cheeks, hand back to being tight and slick around him, taking all of him. His cock hits the back of his throat and he's gone, eyes rolling back as he loses all touch with reality.

He's trembling, fisting blonde hair tightly, hips still rocking through it. Dream strokes him until it becomes too much, having swallowed every drop. His mouth is swollen from maybe being used a bit by George but he looks content as he rises, pushing the leg off his shoulder. The brunette is still trembling but reaches out for him, getting a head shake and hoarse words, "You don't have to, just wanted to make you feel good."

George rearranges his clothes until he's covered again, head spinning when he sits up on his elbows. Their eyes meet and he's a bit surprised by the genuineness in Dream's gaze. His lips curl up, George grasping his arm and tugging softly, "Don't be ridiculous, c'mere."

Dream places a knee up on the bed and the brunette lifts his own leg slightly, hoping the other gets it. He does, hands falling next to George's sides as he brackets his thigh with his own. He lowers his hips slightly and *fuck* Dream is hard when he presses against him. The sweatpants allow him to feel his length through the fabric, hips flexing forward in an experimental grind.

George curves a hand around the nape of his neck, pulling him close, leaving Dream with less control over his movements. The other slides his cock against his thigh pathetically, a low moan leaving his mouth. George is grateful to see the way his eyebrows lift and eyelids flutter with the noise, the way his stomach flexes with each press forward, he murmurs, "Just like that, so good."

He's had no signs that it was the right thing to say, just a guess based on previous platonic pleas for praise throughout their friendship. But it was very much the right call, Dream nearly whimpers, hips stuttering forward. It's a new experience to see Dream, always with his big ego, grinding pathetically against his thigh.

Hands are still on either side of him, the other leaning over him, eyes closed. He's making needy noises from deep in his chest, still slow in his movements. George tries again, thumb brushing over

his face, "Look at you, so pretty, wanting to be good for me. So good, you're so good."

Dream's hips stutter again before shifting heavier against him, speeding up. He tilts his head back, soft jaw sharpening with the movement, making a noise that sounds like a plea. George tugs him back down, lips finding his skin finally after craving it for so long. His mind flashes with the previous reaction to pulling his hair, tightening his grip, and doing so.

A moan, a loud one, he feels it under his lips. He bites down, pulling on soft blonde locks again, nearly forcing his head back with it. Dream spills into his sweats at that, moaning and shifting his way through it. George softens his hold, letting him grind until it's got to be too much, hands finding his waist.

He pushes against him, Dream practically dead weight and falling next to him. George watches the sharp rise and fall of his chest, the darkest bruise so far beginning to blossom on his skin, sweatpants a mess. It's a long silent second of recovery for both of them, the gravity of it starting to peek in. They're saved from a potentially tragic talk by a knock, Sapnap calling through the door but never entering, "Did you guys fall asleep?"

Dream lets out a long sigh, eyes still closed, "Uh.. We'll come down in a sec, promise." Quiet footsteps start making their way back down the hall, they listen as he goes. Then the blonde cracks open one eye, peering at him with almost lazy amusement, "You go downstairs, make up an excuse for me. Gotta change."

George is a bit shocked by that, surprised they're not going to talk about it, "Oh. Okay."

Dream definitely looks more exhausted now, eyes heavily lidded as he peers at him, hand rising to brush the brunette's hair off his forehead. His swollen lips curve up, "Chill, George, you look like you just got fucked or something."

"Shut up," George pushes himself up, face still warm from their activities, "Put on a shirt too while you're on it."

Dream wraps arms around his shoulders, tugging him back down, pressing a kiss against the nape of his neck. Fondness curves through his voice, "Georgie."

"Let me go before he comes back, idiot." He doesn't try to get away, despite his words.

The name reminds Dream and he coos, "*Darling~*"

George shivers at the name and then swats at his arms, "Okay, okay, let me go now."

He feels shaky still when he heads downstairs, probably looking like a total mess. It goes either unnoticed or unmentioned, Karl lifting his gaze from the screen of his phone, "Where's Dream?"

George glances back at the stairs, waving his hand in a way he hopes is nonchalant, "I dunno, texting someone."



## Chapter 16

### Chapter Notes

I don't really have anything to say about this chapter except that it was brutal to write. Boring, I suppose, but what can you do.

(Also, this is unnecessarily irrelevant but if you don't know, a screwdriver is vodka and orange juice. Which is why it tasted gross, vodka is some gross shit, trust me.)

Enjoy haha

When Dream comes downstairs, he seems more energetic than how George left him. He sits on the couch behind him, knees clad in new sweatpants on either side of him. It's soft, intimate in a subtle way, George tilts his head to rest his cheek against the material.

The oldest has a drink in his hand again, passed to him by Karl after he'd said his lame excuse and sat on the floor in front of the couch. He hadn't realized that he'd left the spot behind him free by doing so, not that he's complaining about Dream taking it.

They're both being side-eyed, he knows but chooses to ignore it. He takes the remote offered to him, pointing at Sapnap, "Prepare to lose."

"Please," An eye roll, "The only way you'll win is if you get lucky." Sapnap turns to Dream and offhandedly comments, "It's four players so the worst loser switches."

Dream shakes his head, "How come I'm the one left out?"

Karl points out, "You suck at any game that's not Minecraft."

A pout and Sapnap pats his back sympathetically. George simply takes a drink, wincing at how strong it is, a screwdriver with a bit too little orange juice. He sets it on the coffee table in front of him, picking his character, giggling as he settles on Princess Daisy. Sapnap makes a noise of excitement at that and selects Princess Peach.

George laughs when his shoulder is grasped and shook in the excitement of them both being the princesses. Karl picks Toad and Quackity swears as he chooses Waluigi. Dream sighs, "No matter what I'm gonna be stuck with a shitty character."

The brunette sitting in front of him turns, "Shut up, you look like you'd choose Luigi because he's green."

They all laugh at that, even Dream. The blonde pokes him, grinning, "Or is he?"

"His whole *thing* is that he's green, idiot." George turns back to the screen.

Sapnap chooses Rainbow Road and gets hit by the other three playing, laughing. They all fumble through the level, Karl somehow ending up beating all of them. George proclaims that it's the drink's fault that he did the worst, stuck in twelfth after falling over five times. Not even the powerups could save him.

He makes a noise of complaint as he extends his controller back behind him for the other to take. It's tugged out of his hand gently, fingers brushing over his purposefully. Karl wasn't wrong about Dream being bad at playing, George sips his drink as he watches him repeatedly fall. It's silent except for the clicks of buttons and occasional swearing.

George laughs when Dream ends up in tenth, the level picked not even difficult. The blonde scoffs at him, plucking the glass out of his hand and replacing it with the remote. George watches as he downs the last of his drink, head tilted back and exposing the angry purple mark under his jaw. He can make out the darker parts of the bruise, perfectly in shape with his teeth.

The glass is set back on the coffee table with a solid sound, Dream leaned over him in the action, their eyes meeting momentarily. Then George is forced to focus on the game, trying to ignore the sudden ache of darkened marks on his own neck. He beats Sapnap this time, Quackity leaning over to high-five him.

Sapnap, loser of Moo Moo Meadows apparently, hands his remote reluctantly over to Dream. George's cheeks burn as they play, legs occasionally bumping his shoulders, feeling Sapnap's gaze trail over his neck. *He knows. He's got to.* George tries desperately to plead to whatever god above that it'll go uncommented on. Instead, Sapnap says, "We should make a rule."

Karl is still consistently kicking all of their asses, turning with the track sharply and inquiring, "What?"

"No more visible marks so we can do the cooking stream." Sapnap makes a hand motion, George sees it in the corner of his eye, "We all have them, we need to do the stream eventually."

Quackity hums, stable in third place, "Seems more difficult for some than others."

Dream, also stable but in eighth, hisses, "Oh, shut up."

George simply makes a noise of agreement, happy to be in fifth as long as it means he's beating Dream. The blonde swears and he glances over to see him hit with a red shell, laughing as his proud eighth place dwindles to eleventh. Sapnap continues after the interruption, clarifying, "But we agree to that rule?"

All of them hum in agreement, caught in the last lap. George throws his hands up and cheers as he passes Quackity right at the finish line. He's punched in the shoulder for it, "You asshole!"

Karl giggles in his stupid first-place victory, the fighting pair glaring at him. Dream finishes in ninth, making a noise of annoyance, lazily offering the remote to Sapnap. George pats his knee, twisting and asking with begging eyes, "Can you make me another drink? More orange juice this time."

Dream's expression softens and when he grabs the glass he also dips down to press a kiss into George's hair, smiling, "Of course."

The minute he's in the kitchen, George realizes he's made a vital mistake by being with the other three alone. Karl giggles and nudges him, level being selected, "What's new?"

"*Shut up.*" George hisses back, voice low just in case, "Not a word from you, Karl, not after the first two nights."

Sapnap hits his shoulder, disregarding the race for a moment, "We're going to act like you two didn't take *way* too long to get dressed?"

George glares at him, "It's none of your business. I'll tell you when there's something to know."

Quackity wins this race due to the other three being distracted. George gets last because Dream crowds into his space and hums lightly as he sets down the full glass, "Here, baby."

His fingers just completely freeze up on the controls and twelfth it is. He gets no more than a smug look in answer to his glare, shoving the controller firmly into unready hands. He sulks a bit as he sips his drink, mad about his reaction and doing bad on an easy level, Dream's leg bumping against his arm lightheartedly in response.

The blonde loses, as he's done consistently every race, and George shakes his head when the remote is offered back, "I don't wanna play anymore."

"You okay?" Actual caution leaks into the other's voice, checking if the name actually really was a step too far.

George leans back into the warmth of him more, "Yeah, just tired."

"You wanna come up here? It's probably more comfortable than the floor."

The other three listening in, awkwardly stuck as they talk, turn to look at him expectantly. George can practically feel them all collectively urging him in their heads to say yes, rolling his eyes. He uses Dream's knee to stand, squishing close, the warmth making him realize the coldness of his arms.

It's just a tiny amount of space available between Dream and the arm of the couch, he tries to squeeze into that space, couch not meant to fit four grown men onto it. He's not quite successful in fitting, adjusting to throw his legs over Dream's, who wraps an arm around his shoulders. George elbows his side lightly at the movement, "You need both hands to play."

A shrug, "I'll just lose anyway."

Sapnap finally butts in, "Then don't play, dumbass."

"When this round is over," Dream agrees.

George didn't expect the nerves to hit him so badly about meeting Dream's mother, regretting his hickeys. But also not really regretting the hickeys because *Dream*. They still haven't talked. He's not sure if that's okay. The night before, they'd drifted off on the couch together before stumbling upstairs to collapse into bed.

It'd been the same as normal, warmth pressed against his back and arm around his waist. Almost friendly? Well, as friendly as they've been convincing themselves such a thing is. Now he's numbly going through the motions of breakfast, almost sick from the nerves getting to him. The moment they all retreat into their respective rooms, George spreads out his limbs on the bed dramatically and complains, "Dream."

The blonde's weight dips down the bed next to his hip, knee pressing into the mattress as he stands over him, looking down at his display amusedly, "What?"

George rubs a hand over the side of his neck, running over the marks that haven't improved at all due to the previous night, "What am I going to do about my neck? Your mother is going to think I'm a whore or something."

"Sex is healthy," Dream chuckles, "She won't care."

“But around your sister?”

“George,” He’s fixed with a very amused look, laughter bubbling up in his words, “If it bothers you so much, we can figure something out.”

“Like?” The word sounds hopeless.

Dream collapses next to him, laid on his stomach, looking tired, “Cover it up with clothes.”

George hums, twisting to brush a hand over freckles and prickly stubble, “You tired?”

“A bit,” The blonde admits, leaning into the touch like a cat. George brings his hand up to drag his blunt fingernails lightly over the other’s scalp, getting eyes slipping closed in response. A strong but gentle grip is placed on his waist, Dream turning onto his side to press their chests together. His voice is just a sleepy mumble now, “We should take a nap before my mom gets here.”

George hums in agreement, tucking himself against his friend’s chest, trying to calm his nerves. The rise and fall that he attempts to match with his own breathing helps, large hand sliding to rest between his shoulder blades. Fingers draw mindless patterns there, the brunette comments, “It’s cold.”

“Go get a sweater then.” Dream presses a kiss to his forehead before pulling away, pushing himself up, “That reminds me, actually.”

George scrambles to hold onto the warmth, “I thought we were gonna take a nap?”

His hands are stopped from their pleading, fingers sliding over his to provide some relief to the numbness in them, “Gotta wash the bedsheets in your room before they get here.” The older reluctantly gets up as well, seeking a hoodie thrown messily over the back of the desk chair. Dream states more than asks, “Come with me.”

“I am, idiot.”

Quackity is laid lazily on the bed when they’re invited in, Dream shooing him from the spot, “Go watch a movie or something, gotta clean up before my sister gets here.”

They get multiple swears in response, Quackity standing to gather his belongings a bit. George is the victim of helping Dream, blanket after blanket being placed into his arms. He’s guided, unable to see over the pile of cloth in his grasp, to the laundry room. He swears that Dream takes his sweet time taking the blankets from him, he complains about his arms hurting.

George perches on the dryer once they’re all taken, swinging his legs as he watches the blonde hum. Then Dream moves in time with the song in his head, a bit clumsily of course, managing a spin before he presses his hips between George’s knees. He’s smiling crookedly, asking, “What’re you looking at, love?”

The brunette’s face burns as he shrugs, the sweet name circling through his head over again, making him giggle, “Your bad dancing. Why are you humming?”

“I dunno,” A shrug with one shoulder, “Just a song in my head. Do you still want to change before my mom gets here? You’re covered pretty well with this,” He tugs on the loose sleeve of the hoodie.

“Am I?” George rubs a hand over his neck, being pulled away by his wrist so green eyes can run over the skin again.

"I mean," Dream clicks his tongue, "There's some you can't really do anything about. But yeah."

"You don't even have any, not fair." He sticks out his lip a bit in a pout, toeing over the platonic line once again.

"Excuse me," Raised eyebrows and then he tilts his head to show the dark bite mark, "My *one* is way worse than any of yours, you vampire."

George tugs his neckline to the side, revealing the harsh mark on the crook of his shoulder, "You're not any better."

Dream instantly dips his head to kiss it, hand sliding up to gather a fistful of hair and tug his head to expose more. The brunette presses his knees together, squeezing his hips in retaliation, lips dragging over his skin once more. He's lost in it for a long second, compliant before he remembers he knows better.

George calls, "No more marks, the rule."

He gets a scoff against his skin in response, open-mouthed kisses turning into soft pecks up his neck. He gets a nip under his jaw, not hard enough to bruise, practically a tease to show distaste for his common sense. Arms wrap around his waist, chin hooking over his shoulder, Dream settling for holding him close instead.

George once again drags his nails against his scalp affectionately, bumping their heads together lightly. He asks, "Can we actually take that nap? 'm tired."

"So lazy," Dream chastises him, fingers stroking over the small of his back for a moment. Then they separate, the blonde turning around and hooking his hands behind his knees, "C'mon."

George laughs, properly wrapping himself around the other so he can be carried on his back, pressing his nose against the space behind his ear lovingly. He feels the shiver that runs through Dream at the action, the two of them get a look from Quackity as they head upstairs. They sprawl out under covers, swift fingers tapping on a phone screen to set an alarm for an hour later. George somehow manages to relax enough to doze off.

He wakes to the cautious shifting of weight next to him, already reaching out for the removed warmth to pull him back in. Another shift and lips press against his temple, Dream murmuring, "Alarm went off, darling, time to get up." Fingers brush the hair off his forehead, "You can sleep more if you want."

George blinks open his eyes, hand curving around the nape of the other's neck to brush their noses together before closing them again, getting out, "Not without you."

"Well, I gotta get up." The brunette rubs his thumb over his skin as he says it. The warmth of Dream is being pulled away sooner than he's ready, "Come downstairs when you're up, 'kay? They're gonna be there any minute."

George only makes his way down many minutes after hearing the doorbell ring, yawning and stretching tiredly. Dream turns to beam at him and he almost topples over with a sudden weight hitting his chest, arms around his shoulders as Drista calls, "George!"

She's shorter than him, lanky despite that, the natural awkwardness about her that surrounds any fifteen-year-old. He's too stunned for a second and then he hesitantly gives her a pat on the back, "Hey."

When she lets him go, he's greeted with the sight of her properly for the first time. Her hair is long and lighter than Dream's, though her eyes are a darker green. It's startling the sharpness that lays behind them, she's like her brother in that way. She punches his shoulder, "Finally we meet."

She's got darker freckles, smile less crooked, facial features a bit sharper than her brother's. His brain is still catching up, he blinks down at her. Dream saves him, waving her off with a light dismissive gesture, "We just woke up, give him a break."

"We?" She looks at her brother smugly, who rolls his eyes. She turns back to George, stating, "You look just as gross as you do on camera."

Dream's mother steps in then, "Enough." She's a jolly-looking woman, also shorter than George, smiling at him kindly. Then she pinches his cheeks, "Look at you, so cute! I can't believe Clay has kept me from seeing you."

This is absolute news to him and he laughs, eyes flicking momentarily to his friend's, "Thank you, miss."

She waves her hand, "Nevermind that, call me Donna."

Dream's hand lands lightly on the small of his back, a comforting familiarity, "Ma, stop, you're embarrassing."

"Impossible, he's family!" She gives George another smile like it's some inside joke or something, Drista laughs at his unfortunate awkwardness, "Where are the others?"

"In Sap's room, probably," Dream answers for him. George realizes he's the stranger in this little family around him, all of them looking vaguely similar with light eyes and light hair while he's all earthy brown. A small shift of the hand on his back, like Dream can sense that realization, and he continues, "You can go meet them if you'd like."

Drista leads the way, saying something about annoying Sapnap. George tugs the sleeve of Dream's shirt, the other two walking ahead, murmuring, "You look like your mom."

"Thank you, baby." His caring eyes trace over his face, hand sliding as they walk to curve around his waist and tug him in, "I'm sorry about my sister, she's been excited to meet you."

He smiles softly, "It's okay, I don't know why you're apologizing for it though."

"You were nervous," An exasperated shrug, lips curving up as well, voice quiet as they talk amongst themselves. Then Dream's head lifts to see Drista reaching for the doorknob, calling louder, "*Knock*. New rule, always knock."

Drista makes a face, "Why?"

"Karl's here, it's better not to take the risk."

Donna turns, questioning, "Karl?"

George speaks quietly so he can't be heard through the door, "Sap's partner."

That doesn't seem to clear any confusion amongst the two guests, if anything it seems to cause more confusion. Dream shakes his head, reaching and knocking firmly. Sure enough, Sapnap and Karl are practically sitting on top of each other, Quackity alone on the foot of the bed as the trio talk. Drista speaks first, "Ew."

The word sends George into a fit of laughter, muffling it with his hand and turning away towards Dream's shoulder. Quackity sounds much more polite than he tends to be, "Nice to meet you, I'm Alex."

Karl is giggly too, probably from George's laughter, "I'm Karl."

Drista is making her way to Sarnap when he looks back, still making a face, "What the- What the hell?"

Sarnap squishes her into a hug, "Good to see you too, Dri."

"Who would want to date you? Who did you trick?" She still doesn't fight the hug.

Donna is talking conversationally with Quackity, George's brain kind of tunes it all out due to the gentle fingers rubbing patterns onto his hip. He looks up and is stunned to see that Dream looks almost emotional, his eyes flicking between all of them. George brushes his fingers over his jaw, getting a watery smile in return, commenting, "Sap."

"So what if I am?" His waist is squeezed lightly.

## Chapter 17

### Chapter Notes

Quick chapter and a longer one, what??

Enjoy hehe

George decides that he needs to get Dream shirtless more, resting against him in bed on the expanse of bare skin. He doesn't remember why he took it off, probably some stupid comment or something, but George definitely isn't complaining. The blonde is scrolling through Twitter, humming as he does so, and George drags white lines with his nails down the sensitive skin of his side. Of course he jolts and drops his phone, "What the fuck."

The brunette lifts his head, blinking up at him, "Hm?"

His hand is caught, preventing him from repeating the action on the ticklish spot, "Enjoying the view?"

He nods tiredly, pressing his cheek against his shoulder, "I like your freckles."

Dream's eyelashes are blonde in the light coming through the window, cheeks turning rosy, "Well I'd hope so with how much you stare at them."

"You noticed?" George's voice is still a soft hum, fingers squeezing the other's hand.

"I've noticed from the moment you got here," A sheepish smile, "You're not exactly subtle."

"I'm totally subtle, shut up." He tugs his hand away, hooking one of his legs with the other's. Dream simply blinks at him, they look at each other for a silent moment. Then George sits up, taking back his previous action in exchange for settling upon the other's hips, steadying himself with hands spread on his bare chest.

Then he dips down, Dream's hand curving around his arm for his own stability, peppering soft little kisses on his face. He tries to get as many freckles as possible, the man under him laughing, "What are you doing? You idiot."

When he pulls back, Dream is all red, the color spreading down his chest as well. George realizes this is one of the more forward moments he's had with his friend, he leans down again to kiss between his eyebrows. He murmurs, "You're gorgeous."

"Is this how you're proving you're subtle?" He gets back teasingly, he doesn't think he's seen Dream smile this big yet. George really doesn't feel like saying a comeback, stroking over pink skin, still leaning over him. The man below him softens, hands curving around his hips, voice fond, "*George.*"

"I'm serious," Because he is, "I wish you could see yourself right now."

It throws him off balance when Dream sits up, arms wrapping around his waist and pulling him more snugly into his lap. They're so close, George's thighs framing either side of his hips, as close



as they can be with all the clothes in the way. Lips press under his jaw once lovingly, Dream's voice honest, "God, I love you, George."

"Bit early for that, isn't it?" He jokes riskily, getting a squeeze of his hip in return. He can feel the warmth of his chest through his shirt, wishing his own was off so that they could be closer. A hand rubs his back once and he presses forward, thighs straining from the impossibility of what he wants. He relents after those long moments, "I love you too."

"Have you.." A change in tone, a cautious one, "Been liking Florida?"

"Yes," He reassures, hand on the nape of Dream's neck before running down the curve of his spine, "You're here."

"I know that there's been a lot lately," A hand slips under his shirt, making him shiver from the warmth of it, "But I figure you're probably homesick. Been wondering when you're gonna go back?"

"I dunno." He considers the thought, "I haven't even thought much about visiting. Maybe in a few months."

Soft strokes over his thigh, mindless as they talk, "I'll help you look for your plane ticket."

George pulls away a bit, hand on his back stopping him from falling backward onto the bed, "Wait, why are you even asking?"

"I don't know," Dream's gaze caresses his expression tenderly, "Just thinking about how you talk to your mom a lot, you should go see her. I guess my mom coming over made me realize how shitty it is."

"Oh." That doesn't seem to fully connect to the random question out of nowhere, now Dream is looking everywhere but him. He blinks, asking, "Is it because I met your mom? Do you want to meet mine?"

"That wasn't what I meant, that's intrusive of me, I just meant that you looked.. off when you met my mom, I guess." His eyes land on him for the next part, "I wouldn't ask that of you, George, I know your boundaries."

"What the fuck?" What leaves his mouth is the first thing he thinks after hearing that. He said before that it was never questioned about them meeting, but now here's the question and he knows his answer. He curves gentle hands around his face, leaning back in, "Why would you think that I don't want you to meet my mom?"

"You're a private person. It's okay, I don't have to." Fingers stroke over his wrist lovingly.

"I want you to if that's what you want." He says truthfully, "We can go in a few months."

Dream presses a kiss into his palm and his eyes are shiny, it seems as if he's simply emotional today. George gives him a second, not pressing for an answer, thumb rubbing over his cheek when his watery gaze trails up to him. The smile he gets is weak, "I've never been to London before."

And George's heart soars, he dips down to press a kiss to his cheek, laughing maybe a bit shakily himself, "Fuck, she's going to love you."

Arms wrap around him with a new security, they embrace yet again, fingers bunching up his shirt. They both laugh breathlessly, sniffing a bit, pressed together. George isn't sure what this means

for them at all, not when they're nothing and *something* at the same time. They still haven't talked, he's scared to bring it up.

He doesn't think he's moved so fast in his life at the creak of the floorboards in the hallway, much too heavy to be Patches. He twists off of his friend's lap, both of them withdrawing from each other in fear of their tender hold being exposed. Sure enough, the rattle of the doorknob and then Drista's head peeking in, "Hey."

Dream rubs a thumb over his cheek, like he's reminiscing on George's lips there, "Do you need something? Is something wrong?"

Her eyes jump between the two of them, the way that the distance between them seems rushed and both of them are pink. She shrugs, walking in like she owns the space, "No, I was just bored." She picks up a knickknack on a shelf, turning it over so she doesn't have to look at the two of them, "Why are you shirtless? That's kinda gay."

That sends Dream into a dry laugh, "Gay? How is it gay? It's just hot in here."

She turns and her smile is mischievous, lying, "Gay? I said *okay*, you're manifesting stuff now."

George exchanges a look with him and Dream eases back, laying down and asking the ceiling, "So what do you wanna do?"

"Can we...", Her eyes meet George's, sharpness telling him they're *not fooling anyone*, she smiles, "Can we go to the beach at sundown like we usually do?"

"With everyone?" Dream turns his head and his smile eases into something more privately relaxed.

"Whoever wants to go," She answers, eyes shifting to the brunette's expectantly.

He twists his own fingers together so he doesn't grab his friend's, admitting, "I think I'll stay home."

Dream hums, "No?"

George's voice drops, softening, "I'm tired."

Drista cuts in, "Quit being weird. Can we stream? Or are you guys gonna make out first?"

George makes a face at her words, "Gross."

"Homophobic," Dream points at him, amusement dancing behind his eyes. Then he gets up, "Yeah, we can stream, people will die over you two meeting."

By the end of the stream, George's shoulder aches from being punched. They were supposed to be beating the game, which they definitely didn't do. He rubs over the tender muscle that will most likely bruise, making a face to show his distrust that she won't hit him again the moment he turns his back.

Dream tells her multiple times during the stream not to, furrowed eyebrows and a gentle reminder that George is *not* him. But the sibling nature of their relationship makes her roll her eyes and continue, not that George is particularly upset about it. If anything, he's thrilled that they're getting along decently well, scared of the awkwardness of meeting his *whatever's* family.

George runs the stream mostly from Dream's account, the blonde sitting back and simply

watching and laughing along. He's grateful for the trust there too, that his control-freak-of-a-friend so willingly hands over the responsibility of his entire career. Fuck, George wishes he could kiss him when he's guided through his setup to make changes.

Drista withdraws and lets the two of them end the stream, not wanting the awkwardness of saying goodbye. It's when the first traces of orange, at least George thinks it's orange, show up in the sky. She leaves to supposedly get ready for the beach while Dream leans over George to change all his setup back to how it was.

A kiss on his head, "That was fun."

"Mm," George brushes a hand over his forearm, "Yeah, it was."

"I'm glad you two get along." Dream pulls away to sit instead, scooting in as his fingers are occupied with his task, "Was worried you might not."

"Yeah, withholding me from meeting your mom?" George teases and he gets a weak laugh in return.

"I knew you would bring that up," His eyes shift to him and his hands pause, smile small, "I was just- I don't know, I dunno what I was thinking."

George reaches and tangles their fingers together, squeezing and saying affectionately, "Idiot."

They share a private smile, a thumb rubbing over his knuckles. Then Dream tilts his head to the side, questioning, "You're really not going to the beach with us?"

"Worried you can't cope without me?" His smile grows.

He gets the shake of a head, Dream pulling away his hand to continue fixing his setup, "No. Just thought you'd wanna go."

"Dream," He laughs a little, "I can't even *see* the sunset properly."

"But the *beach* and *ice cream* and your favorite person ever being *shirtless*," Dream chuckles along, eyes trained on the screen.

"Convincing argument but I'm too tired."

The blonde's eyes shine when they shift to his face, grin still tugging up his lips, "Who's gonna hold my hand on the pier then?"

"You can simply not be a baby," George offers as an alternative, brushing the light curls on his forehead to the side gently.

"Dri always makes fun of me," He sticks out his bottom lip in a pout.

The brunette kisses his cheek, eyelashes fluttering in response, he hums out, "You'll live."

"You're so mean," Dream presses their noses together, voice quieting. Then he sighs in defeat, pulling away to turn off his pc. He stands, stretching, shirt that he put on before the stream lifting to show his stomach. For once George touches, rubbing his fingertips over toned skin to feel tight muscles from the stretch. They're caught after a second, being lifted so a kiss can be placed on the soft skin on the top of his hands, Dream murmuring, "Love you, Georgie."

"Is that so?" He smiles back, being pulled up out of his chair to his feet. He's embraced so tightly

that he's dipped back, laughing and hitting a palm against the other's shoulder, "Stop, you idiot. I know, I know, you big sap."

"You always call me that," Patterns being traced on the small of his back, hold on his waist loosening, "You're not much better, you know."

George hums in acknowledgment of that fact, feeling the laugh that bubbles up in Dream's chest. He smiles, pushing him away, "Go get ready for your dumb beach trip."

Dream does, George draping himself over their sheets to observe his humming and swaying. And his toned back, which flexes as he pulls a new shirt on. Also the curve of his waist, his clumsy hands as he gathers things, his hair that sticks up in random directions, his cute expression when he's thinking..

"Babe?" The brunette's head lifts at the name, eyes not on him as Dream asks, "Do you remember where I put the sunscreen?"

"Probably still outside." George offers, mind reeling as it has every time a sweet name has been used for him. But to *respond* to one so blatantly? He wonders briefly how he'd ask Dream on a date if that was a possibility for them, he'd probably get all flustered. He wishes he had the courage to kiss him properly, to taste careful coral.

He's left alone for a second as he ponders. Then Dream returns, grabbing his sweater and looking around one last time. George extends his arms, being leaned over as a kiss is pressed to his cheek, "Bye, baby." The older tugs on him and hands use the bed to push away, Dream clicking his tongue, "If I lay with you, I'll never get up."

"Exactly," The word earns him a smile.

"Pretty boy," Two more pecks on the cheek and Dream pulls away reluctantly, "I gotta go before they yell at me. Sap's staying home too at least."

"Bye." George watches as he disappears into the dark hall with a half-wave of his hand. It's endearing. He lays there and smiles at the ceiling like an idiot for a while, getting up only when he weirdly feels like he's overheating. He seeks some shorts, going into his room and carefully avoiding Drista's belongings.

It's barely even his room anymore, just a place to put his stuff but never to live and sleep in. He's unsure about the idea of living in Dream's room officially, their clothes mixing and their toothbrushes together in the bathroom. He's not sure if he wants that or how to ask for it if he does. Another conflict for him to ignore, he supposes.

What is he even supposed to do? Ignoring the healthy path of communicating has been working so well in his favor, what if Dream withdraws when he brings any of it up? That's what he appeared to do before, scared off from the verbal acknowledgment of the possibility of them sleeping together. And now? Well, they kind of *did* go there with their relationship.

Not completely but it still stands, friends do *not* do what they did. As he slides on his shorts he ponders the chance of a friends with benefits type thing. He couldn't do that, he shakes his head, he already has too many emotions swirling inside him involving the other. Sex with Dream sounds great but he doesn't want it if there's not also more.

Which means, wow, he wants to be with Dream. Somehow that's a shock, despite how they act. He considers the fact that their being together would shove the label of boyfriend onto both of them.

Dream as a *boyfriend*? What is Dream even like as a partner? *What if he's shitty?* A scared part of himself questions.

But, also, it's *Dream*. Dream who calls him sweet names and holds him and looks at him as if he's his entire world. It's really not even the fact of him being unsure about the other's feelings for him, he knows at least somewhat that there's something there. It's just the matter of their careers together and their lives together existing as they currently are. Once again, change is what sends the chill down his spine.

And Dream, the absolute idiot, thinks he's going to run off to London at the first sign of it. And will he? No, admittedly he's attached to living as he is. To go back to being lonely in his house, a cold bed with silence amplifying his thoughts, would make him go insane. In London, there is no Dream, who undeniably has his heart captured in his big clumsy hands. At least no Dream in London yet.

He makes a face at the mental image of his mother meeting Dream. To see the two in a room together will be so foreign, two very important people in his life meeting. What if they don't like each other? He knows it's foolish because Dream is the picture-perfect man to meet parents with his charming smile and endearing nervousness. Also, his head-over-heels look that passes on his face when he looks at George for too long.

His mother will be thrilled, the possibility of one of her kids finally successfully finding love. She wants them all to be happy no matter what their desires, maybe she just encourages him especially because he *does* want a partner. And Dream? Of course Dream will love his mom, he loves anyone that makes George happy. He supposes the nervousness he feels about it is just normal.

George doesn't remember how he ended up on the couch or when he put a movie on, lost in thoughts, jumping out of it by a touch on his shoulder. Sapnap chuckles, "What are you thinking about?"

He shrugs, opening his arms, and the younger sinks into his hold and tucks his head under his chin. Instead of answering, he avoids, "We need to hang out together more."

"I know, Dream steals you away from me." Arms wrap around his back and he realizes too late that it's to prevent him from escaping the conversation, the younger asking again, "What were you thinking about?"

"I..". He knows it sounds major, he really does, "I asked Dream to visit London with me, to meet my mom."

"*What?*" Sapnap hisses, "You're joking."

"Well, he thought I didn't want him to meet her. And I do, I guess."

"You guess?"

"I do," He affirms, "I guess it's kinda confusing though. Because we're.. Yeah. So meeting my mom as a friend or *meeting my mom?*"

Sapnap laughs into his chest, the two of them still holding onto each other, "He's probably having the same crisis right now."

"I know." George muses. Then, after a beat of silence, he admits quieter, "I'm scared."

"About?"

“All of it? I don’t even know what we are and he likes me, I see it now. But he doesn’t kiss me.” He thinks about it more, “And he freaked out a bit last time I acknowledged anything, so I can’t even talk to him about it.”

“It’s a lot,” Sapnap agrees, “There’s a lot on the line, more than just friendship and all that. But I know you guys, I think.. I think you need to just talk to him about it anyway.”

“I..” George sighs in defeat, “I agree.”

They’re quiet for a while, both thinking, then Sapnap pulls away. He smiles lopsidedly, “Wanna go to the skatepark?”

“I thought you didn’t wanna go out.” George rolls his eyes at the shrug in response, getting up, “Go get your coat, it’s probably cold.”

He grabs bandaids to stick in his pockets, as he always does, under the guise of being unable to find his phone. Sapnap knows what he’s really doing but it’s a silent agreement to never acknowledge George’s habit of caring. There’s the sibling dynamic of acting like you couldn’t care less while taking care of each other, it’s just how they work.

They listen to Sapnap’s shitty playlist as they drive and George settles down on his usual spot at the top of a ramp. He dangles his legs over, visible misty puffs of breath leaving his mouth, goosebumps rising across his legs. He should’ve changed into pants, it was a stupid decision to just take a hoodie. He pulls the bright green hood over his curls, shoving his hands in the pocket.

He half-heartedly yells for Sapnap to try certain tricks to antagonize him, having learned names after almost-lectures from the younger. Whatever, sharing hobbies or whatever, George still isn’t getting on one of those death traps. He can only see his friend barely in the dim light, the lights trying their best to cover the area but failing.

His overgrown hair peeks out of his hat, he doesn’t even seem cold in his basketball shorts. The only sign that he’s in the same temperature as George is in the rosiness of his cheeks, when he lands a trick he cheers and throws his hands up. The older finds comfort in the familiarity of Sapnap’s body language, he finds that he missed this. It’s been a while since the two of them have done this.

George’s heart jumps to his throat worriedly as it always does when his friend disappears into the dark of the concrete bowl. But he always comes up the other side, cheering as he does as if it helps him land the jump. That’s a new thing, George has got to experience the start of Sapnap learning how to remain steady on ramps, he still worries every time though.

Sapnap is so smug when he makes his way up to him, “Like what you see?”

George scoffs, though what it means is *be careful*. The younger shakes his head, preparing to go down the ramp that George is sitting at the top of. Usually, he sits here because he can see the whole park, for the most part, meaning it’s the tallest one. He nearly falls off the edge when Sapnap slips off his skateboard near the bottom, stumbling a few steps, he leans over and looks him over for any sign of injury.

Nothing, he throws his hands up and assures, “I’m okay!” And then he seeks his skateboard where it’d continued into the dark. Now, George assumes they’ve been there for an hour at this point at least. Enough for Sapnap’s initial awkwardness on a board to go away at least, which means many tricks before he even went into the concrete bowl. Still though, George is worried when he climbs back up the ramp to go again.

It could've just been a bad first try but George gives him a look, getting a smile in return. Which is a silent reminder that Sapnap knows his own limits, the older's hands sweat nonetheless as he watches him get ready on the edge. Alas, his intuition is never wrong, his friend falls much earlier this time. He falls backward too, landing on his back on hard concrete and sliding down.

It's reassuring that he starts pushing himself up as soon as he stops sliding, that he wasn't hurt too badly. Still, George pushes himself and slides down smoothly in reckless abandon. Maybe he hits his back on the edge as he goes but he barely feels it, more set on making sure Sapnap is okay. The younger looks at him like he's crazy, blinking at him, "I'm okay."

George grasps onto his shoulder worriedly, "You didn't hit your head?"

"No, somehow I didn't." Sapnap rubs his hand over his elbow and winces, "I think I'm done for the night though."

George patches up his scraped elbows without a word, gentle but swift fingers, before pushing himself up to his feet. He offers his hand and says, "I'm buying you a helmet, I swear."

Sapnap laughs at that and everything becomes better. They listen to the same shitty playlist on the way home and depart after a silent late-night dinner and one more reassurance that the other didn't hit his head. George feels dead on his feet as he goes upstairs, met with a room with no Dream. He sighs, turning around and heading back downstairs.

Sapnap is scrolling through his phone when he opens the door, in bed also looking tired. George climbs under the covers with him without a word, settling against his chest. There are no comments about how they just parted, nothing about Sapnap proving he cares as well. He's just squeezed close with a careful arm, allowed to doze in safe company.

He dozes more than he realizes, soothed by the rise and fall below him. Karl's giggles are what wake him up, he lifts his head and blinks at the light that greets him out of the warmth of Sapnap's chest. The younger is also dozing, eyes closed but breathing not slow enough to signal proper sleep. Karl stands at the foot of the bed, Dream in the doorway, and Quackity peeking in behind him with Drista.

It's almost as if they were all called to see. George slips out of Sapnap's hold, whose head lifts suddenly as if he was shaken awake. The floor is cold under his feet, the difference from the warmth of under the blankets making goosebumps rise on his exposed legs. Karl's hand grasps his elbow to make sure he doesn't fall on a random pair of shoes on the floor, he giggles again, "Rough night?"

George just hums and then extends his hands to Dream, "Let's go to bed."

Eyes flick down to his bare thighs and then back up to his sleepy gaze, hand guiding him by his wrist to a broad shoulder. He's less warm than George, smiling softly, "Tired?"

"Told you." He smiles back, wrapping his arms around his neck, repeating, "Let's go sleep."

Hesitation and then hands tug him by his waist, "Let's go then." Quackity and Drista quickly get out of the way of their stumbling, Dream looking back with an amused grin, "Night everyone."

They get it in return and George offers a half-asleep hum, eyes slipping closed again. Hands secure themselves behind his thighs and he's lifted familiarly, wrapping himself around the other. He doesn't remember actually falling back asleep in his arms, he supposes they'll simply have to talk later.





## Chapter 18

### Chapter Notes

I have actually written this so fast??? Four-day weekends are heaven-sent, I swear.

Also, my birthday is on Monday! Legal adulthood, yay.

Anyway, this part is pretty much entirely smut. The longest piece of smut I've ever written so that's fun, enjoy I guess

George is a coward, it's official. Not that he's ever been particularly convinced that he was otherwise, but this time it's bad. It's not that he doesn't know Dream, he knows they won't fight about it nor will he be ridiculed if the other freaks out. But still, the tender green eyes that never waver always halt the talk before it even starts.

He doesn't even know where to start it or how, it never seems like the right time. He feels like even without the talk that the thing between them is fragile. Yes, Dream is more handsy. Does he ever take it a step too far? No, he withdraws entirely as if he's putting a firm stop to his wandering hands.

And George doesn't even mind his touch, not being grasped by the waist and definitely not the soft names. He's been quick to adjust nicely into their safe little bubble that exists when they're alone. He's just not sure how to toe over the line to make Dream feel the need to *claim*. George supposes that implies that he wants certain actions to clarify that they're each other's.

Or does Dream simply think that it's a given? Is that why? Or does he simply not want him? He's not sure if he prefers the frustration or the sting. Every time it gets to him and he calls the other's name, eyes turn to him attentively and the words die on his tongue. Maybe he prefers the soothing of hands that are unknowing but caring about his distress over the complicated weave of a talk.

Because Dream notices his debate, of course he does, they've always been able to read each other. But no questions, just a tighter hold on him at night when they're not shielded by the security of the sun. George wonders if he knows or just doesn't care. Again, the frustration versus the sting.

So George submits to his silence, getting looks from Sapnap that remind him once again that he's a coward. He gets a look from Drista when she goes too and he wants to plead with her to talk to her brother for him. He absolutely fucked, he's going to have to fight to get the words out.

Which he doesn't do, days passing him by with laughs into the crook of his neck and large hands on his hips. He doesn't argue when a finger dips into the collar of his shirt and tugs him forward, a private smile given to him by Dream when he asks, "Lemme dress you for the cooking stream?"

George wrinkles his nose at the question, looking him over once and feigning a scoff, "I dunno.."

The grin widens into something more amused, a roll of eyes, "Shut up."

Quackity is once again in the guest room after another wash of sheets, victim to the two of them commonly barging in on him to reach George's belongings. He's sitting on the bed and drops his phone into his lap with an annoyed, "Fucking move your stuff into his room then."

“Sorry,” Dream doesn’t look too sorry. He shifts through the closet, George sharing a look with Quackity. Then he turns away to ogle at the blonde’s ass in his sweats for just a moment, taking the steps forward to wrap his arms around the younger’s waist. His hand is pat gently in acknowledgment, making him press his face between his shoulder blades.

Then Dream tugs him along by his wrist upstairs, clothing draped over his arm. George takes the pair of jeans handed to him, watching his friend go into his own closet. He presses white fabric into his hand, commanding, “Change.”

The brunette blinks at the back that’s turned to him before slowly rising from his seat on the bed. The jeans are a faded light blue, baggy on him. Almost as if Dream remembers that at the same time, he swears to himself, pacing forward to go through a dresser drawer. The belt extended to him, eyes still turned away, is black with a silver rectangular buckle. George takes it and comments, “This isn’t even close to something I’d wear.”

“Try it.” is the answer he’s given. He rolls his eyes, grateful that at least the belt helps make the jeans fit on his hips better. The shirt is just a plain white one, the one that he saw on Dream what feels like decades ago when they went to the beach. He’s forced out of the warmth of the shirt he’s been in all day, shivering when his skin is exposed, tugging the new one over his head. He hums at being done and he’s not ready for the gaze that trails over him, a hand reaching for him but not touching, “Can I?”

George doesn’t understand what he means but he nods, a finger hooking in the loop of his jeans and tugging him a step closer. He definitely doesn’t expect hands to be pushing the shirt into his pants for him, the heat of them making him shiver. Then Dream urges him to the mirror with a hold on his waist, allowing him to see himself in the outfit for the first time. It’s not his style but he can’t deny that he looks good, he asks for confirmation, “Good?”

Hands tug the shirt out of his pants a little, making it baggier. It’s nice to see the other towering behind him in the reflection, a sense of safety settling in his stomach at the sight. The eyes that meet his momentarily are dark, nose dipping to graze the side of his neck. He tilts his head to allow it, large hand splaying on his abdomen to press his hips back, met with obvious stiffness against his lower back. It’s just a breath against his skin, “Good.”

George’s mouth instantly goes dry, eyelids fluttering, warmth joining the safe feeling in his stomach. He forgets, has forgotten, that Dream is attracted to him in the same way that he’s attracted to Dream. It never shows more than little glances but *this*? This is a question. He shifts back against him, granting a little friction, murmuring back, “Okay.”

Of course Dream has to retract his touch so suddenly, it almost feels offhanded, “You should probably change back so you don’t get Patches hair on that.”

George blinks at the other’s back turned to him again, feeling like he has whiplash from the change in mood. He eyes the set jaw warily though, unsure of his movement made him angry. But what did Dream expect him to do? Of course he was going to seek more. He huffs, not caring if the other hears the noise, seeking his comfortable clothes. But on the floor he spots his shorts and considers them.

Because Dream likes him in those shorts, eyes guaranteed to constantly be trailing over pale thighs. An extra push so to speak. Dream deserves the torture after leaving him with an erection by letting him feel the outline of his cock through his sweatpants, he picks the shorts up off the floor and pulls them on. Maybe he’s a bit mad about being left untouched so suddenly.

But if it really isn’t something Dream wants then nothing will happen, him wearing the shorts

won't force anything at all. Just a taunt, nothing more. He slides on his previous shirt, cold from changing, the brilliant idea hitting him to slide on a hoodie as well. He hums to signal that he's done and Dream complains, "Finally."

The flat look and furrowed eyebrows falter in their intensity when eyes land on him. But his jaw is still set and George turns away to check his phone, explaining with, "'s cold."

He's aware he looks naked under the hoodie. *Dream's* hoodie. He knows and he intended it to look that way, playing nonchalant as he checks his messages. If Dream wants to hold back then both of them can play that game, he's sturdy in his stubbornness not to instantly beg. If George is a weak man in the other's presence then Dream is much weaker, there's only a beat of silence.

Then hands are on him, a chest against his back, one large hand sliding between his legs to squeeze high on his thigh. He spreads them to allow it, fingertips dipping up under the hem of his shorts slightly, so close to where he wants them. The other hand had landed on his waist, sliding down to his hip and squeezing, George simply breathes back the word, "Finally."

A mouth finds the place under his jaw, which seems to be a favorite of Dream's, a scoff against his skin that echoes *whore*. He rolls his hips back in answer, whining without shame, hand grasping for support on the warm forearm that's laid across his thigh. Another tight squeeze of the soft flesh there, possessive, words against his skin, "Fuck, George, in *my* clothes and those *damn shorts*."

"Yeah?" George tilts his head back against his shoulder, using the solidness of his body to keep him upright, "Show me how you feel about it then."

Dream doesn't hesitate, manhandling him around and then back against the bed, hand hooking up under his knee to pull his legs apart more. To feel Dream pressed against the most sensitive part of himself has him whimpering, nails digging into broad shoulders pleadingly. Just one roll of strong hips and there's space between them again, a noise of frustration leaving the blonde's lips, "Wish I could mark you up so pretty."

George hates the distance, legs bent and spread still, watching Dream's set jaw as he shuffles through a nightstand drawer. The bottle of lube that's produced sends shivers down his spine, settling in that this is really happening. He hates the clench of the other's jaw still, reaching for him and being surprised how compliant he is to the hand on the nape of his neck tugging him closer. Their foreheads brush and everything turns more tender, George requests, "Can you just-" Then he retries, "I'm clean."

"Oh." Dream's jaw loosens with the words, thumb rising to brush over the brunette's cheek, "Okay. If that's what you want."

"Is it what you want?" He asks and Dream pulls away to push the drawer closed, grasping the bottle.

"Yes, it is, don't worry." Dream seems to fall back into his arousal so easily, eyes trailing over him and his still-spread legs. When hands push up the hoodie and shirt, revealing more smooth pale skin, he feels a bit vulnerable with the analyzing gaze trained on him so intently. He tries to press his knees together without much thought and the back of a hand meets the inside of one, pushing them gently back apart, "How am I gonna spread you open if you can't even let me look at you?"

"You're-" George's face is warm and he squirms a bit, "You're a lot."

Which is true, the curtains are drawn so no rays of sunlight are hitting Dream's features but still he seems to glow. His hair hangs over his forehead, eyes deeper and darker with want, still with the

same gentle features. Gentle coral. The color presses against a beauty mark on the inside of his knee, a silent comment, before those hands are back to pushing up his clothes to reveal more, "Let me see you."

And George would give him anything he asked for. Palms are smooth on the skin of his back when he sits up to slip it over his head. A hum and Dream presses his face into the crook of his neck, leaned over him like he's every god in the sky. With the sin in his touch, George thinks Dream might be every god in the ground. Now *touch, touch, touch. Make me fall*, he pleads to no one in his head. He fists the cotton still over the other's torso, firmly saying, "Off."

His friend pulls away to comply, sitting up between his thighs, grabbing the back of the collar of his shirt to tug it over his head. It makes his blonde curls mess up, George openly stares at him, mouth dropped open. Dream seems rather smug about that, smirk twitching at his lips, eyes giving him a once-over again. He tugs at the bottom of his little shorts, obviously wanting them off, making him try to squeeze his legs closed again. A squeeze of his thigh, "I've already seen you before, baby."

It's a gentle reminder, George's eyes are too busy caught on the veins branching out in the large hand. Another squeeze and they jump up to meet ones already trained on him, the confession slipping past his lips against his will, "I don't want to be naked alone."

"Me first?" Dream offers, gaze caring. George hits his hip with the inside of his knee, giving him a look and he chuckles, "Okay, okay, I'll stop being so nice."

Which means George is stripped and exposed alone, hand pushing up one of his legs with no more careful caution. Dream squeezes the flesh of his hip with his other, brushing his thumb over the v of his hip before he slides a hand around him. George instantly reacts to finally being touched, arching into it with a moan.

He lets his head fall back so he doesn't have to meet the hot gaze he can feel brushing over his flushed skin. Dream is crooning something that his brain doesn't let him catch onto, not with the relief of pleasure blinding him. The touch on his cock is practiced, the twist of a wrist making him care less about being seen and spread out on sheets.

Just the drag of a thumb over the head before he's let go, panting and wanting to latch onto the other. Dream leans to provide him just that, steadying him with the available grasp on his shoulders, lips parted and eyes blown out. George doesn't even care about the stupid rule anymore, gripping hard onto blonde locks to tug him down, placing open-mouthed kisses down his flushed skin.

Hands slide over his back again, simply with the intention of brushing over his skin. George sinks his teeth in a freckled shoulder and commands, "Dream, if you don't-"

"Shut up, fuck, you're so demanding." He's pushed back down with a hand on his chest, eyes meeting his intensely as his voice is low in his chest dangerously, "You'll get my cock, be patient, you're such a slut."

Hands force him to turn around, on his stomach for a moment before his hips are tugged up so he's on his knees. He opens his mouth to complain about not wanting to be in this position for the first time and he's shushed before any words even leave his mouth. Hands smooth over his sides, erection against him in this close position, a nose pressing against the nape of his neck.

Dream presses a kiss there and then trails down over his spine, most likely leaving marks, dragging his hot mouth over his ribs. He shivers at the feeling, too caught up in the sensitive area to be

prepared for the sharp canines sinking into the skin over the bone of his hip. Finally, he gets to feel the other's teeth on him again, moaning into the sheets.

The press of lips soothes the pain, hands sliding up over his thighs before he's touched again. The next bite is right under the curve of his ass, hand working on his cock, making George's fingers twist around the sheets for support. He whimpers and warns, "*Dream-*"

Soft kisses low on his back, words against his skin, "It's okay, cum for me." George moans at the words, hand on him moving faster with the slickness of his pre-cum, thighs trembling. Another bite just above the one on his hip, into the sensitive flesh there, has him stumbling over the edge. His eyes roll back and he trembles through it, sound leaving his mouth sure to be pathetic. Dream's hand strokes him through it, lips brushing just below his ribcage, humming out, "Good boy."

George's legs feel like they're going to give out and a hand tugging on his waist guides him onto his side, Dream's clean hand running through his hair gently as he settles behind him. It's an obvious intention to stop and think that they're done. George catches his hand, turning so that their eyes can meet, trying to portray that he doesn't want them to be.

His brain is still too foggy to get the right words out. Dream understands, thumb sliding to press to the corner of his mouth, voice still husky, "Again?"

The brunette presses his hips back against the erection still straining sweatpants, managing, "Want you."

"Okay, darling," A kiss to his temple before he's being leaned over. The previously forgotten bottle of lube is grasped again, he's compliant with the hands that move him. It's just a hold on his thigh, pulling his leg back and urging him to rest it on a clothed hip, Dream murmuring, "Like this."

But then George whines, not even caring about previously being shushed, "Want *you*. Naked."

A sigh and then he's freed from the position for a moment, the strain in his thigh from the stretch halting. Dream is quick to shove his sweatpants and boxers off together, kicking them away as George whimpers at the sight of his thick swollen cock. Sure, he's felt him through clothing, but he's never *seen* him before. He's suddenly more eager to be prepped already.

He's pathetically already half-hard again, being guided back into the previous position. Dream makes a weak noise at the brush of his cock against him with no clothes in the way, hand squeezing the inside of his thigh as if he's steadying himself from losing control. The hand on his thigh is the one that he'd cum from the touch of, leaving sticky marks on his skin. He feels absolutely filthy, whining for more.

Its tight hold on him leaves to slide between them after being slicked with lube. It's cold against his rim and he makes a noise of displeasure, Dream shushing him gently from where he's pressed his forehead against his shoulder to look down and watch. He hums, "Relax," and when a thick finger presses into him without much resistance he praises, "Good."

He feels exposed and vulnerable with the position they're in, naked body completely spread and uncovered. Still, it's worth the slight discomfort with the finger working in and out of him, soft breaths hitting his back. He calls slightly, "Dream," and the man behind him lifts his head to press his nose behind his ear, attentive as always, "I love your hands."

"Yeah?" Soft pecks there but George knows the other is just itching to mark him. Another finger, still for a second until he flexes his hips back against them in encouragement, picking back up the

previous pace and curving sweetly inside him, “Make you feel good, hm?”

“So good, you have no idea,” He sees stars when his prostate is brushed, lewd noise leaving his mouth. He’s fully hard again at this point already, those large fingers rubbing his prostate with each slide, out until the first knuckle then pressing back in all the way. He pushes onto them, a third finger joining them and making his toes curl, Dream letting out soft moans against his neck as his cock slides over his lower back with each of his movements. He begs breathlessly, “Need you in me right now, *fuck*.”

“You sure?” It earns Dream a *‘shut the fuck up’* in response, making him chuckle and pull away the fingers stretching him open. A slight shift and the thick head of Dream’s cock slides over his entrance, once and then twice. It’s spoken through a groan, “Gonna fill you up so good.”

George hates that they’ll have to pull away but he asserts, “Not like this. Hurts.” Which is true, the strain in his legs is becoming almost enough to be distracting. No protest about them changing positions, it’s just harsher hands that are pushing him down onto the mattress in their desperation, Dream leaning up over him.

Their eyes meet and the man on top of him swears, eyes fluttering shut for a moment seemingly against his will, voice wrecked in his want, “Fuck, George.”

George simply lifts his legs, pulling him in closer, their cocks sliding together in the motion and making them both shiver. He breaks the rule once again to litter freckled skin in three more hickeys, asking lowly when no movements are made, “Are you gonna fuck me or not?”

“Yes,” Dream answers in a breathless way, sureness still solid behind it. George watches as he wraps practiced fingers around his own cock, dripping onto his stomach and adding to the mess on his skin. A low groan deep in his chest, stroking just a few times before he’s gripping the stupid little bottle of lube with his slick fingers, another sound leaving his lips as he spreads it over himself.

Then he lines himself up, thick head of his cock back to teasing his rim. A squeeze of thighs around his hips and he steadies himself with a hand on the bed next to George’s side, pressing forward. It’s *so much*, almost *too much*. He cries out at the feeling of being so full, hands scrambling for a place on Dream’s back, the other stopping halfway pressed into him.

The man above him has his lip captured between his teeth, eyes squeezed shut, the moan leaving his mouth absolutely filthy. George digs his nails into his skin, both of them a bit paralyzed by the feeling. Then Dream eases into his attentiveness, heavy gaze landing on him as a soothing hand rubs over his side. He still speaks through clenched teeth, strained with the comment of, “Tight.”

“Big,” George counters, forcing himself to relax into the soft touch, hand pushing the hair off Dream’s forehead. A dark rosiness lies across his face, both of them have sinful color gracing their skin, he wishes they were closer. He thinks he’s ready now, sliding his hands back down to broad shoulders, asking, “More.”

He has a feeling he’d get told off for the statement any other time, tone not particularly nice. Instead, he’s punished with the harsh press of Dream’s hips, sinking into him all the way to the hilt. It’s the blonde’s turn to scramble for a grip on him, hold bruisingly tight around his hip as his voice breaks, “Ah, *George*.”

They’re closer than they’ve ever been, yet still not close enough. White-hot pain is spreading through him due to *too much* but still, he tugs him impossibly closer with the legs around his hips. Dream gasps at the action, circling his hips in a way that seems instinctual, making George cry out

again. He's wary of other people being in the house but he also doesn't care when he literally has Dream *inside him*, hissing, "*Move.*"

The first movement is just a shift, like the man inside him doesn't even want to pull away from his tightness an inch. Then hands press into his hips, securing him against the sheets firmly as he pulls away and then presses back into him hot and slick. George's eyes roll back just from the sinful feeling, a moment of pause from Dream.

"Harder. More. Dream, *please*-" His words get broken by another rough thrust, only a fraction of a hesitant pause before another one. It seems like his begging has finally gotten through to the other, the press of hips growing more confident with each one, making his thighs tremble uselessly. The sound of the bedframe hitting the wall harshly only turns him on more, nails digging into the other's skin harshly.

A large hand gathers both of his smaller ones, forcing them off him and up above his head, making him feel ungrounded. He makes a pathetic noise to tell him that, brain too empty about everything except the thick cock pressing into him rhythmically. Fingers thread together with his to resolve the issue, both of their hands being used to keep down the other.

He's spread out under him, helplessly pinned by his hips and his hands. Dream moves his free hand to grab his thigh roughly, forcing his leg up so that they can both see where they're connected. It also shifts the angle that he's getting fucked at, head of the other's cock hitting his prostate bruisingly hard.

George vaguely even realizes he's making noise, barely on earth anymore, lost somewhere in heaven or the clouds. Dream is breathing hot pants against his skin, unrelenting now that he's found the spot that makes him see stars. It's nearly a growl, spoken through clenched teeth once again, punctuated with a thrust every other word, "You're fucking made for this, aren't you?" A moan in response as his head falls back and Dream swivels his hips with the next press forward, "Letting me use you."

George pleads, a whining mess, back arching at those words. He thought he'd forgotten every word except *please* and *Dream* but he manages to summon one more to spill from his lips, "Yours."

"Mine." Dream confirms lowly, movements becoming more sloppy. The noises in the room are already dirty, skin hitting skin and their moans, but somehow that word is the filthiest. It has George's back bowing off the bed, cumming completely untouched, loudest whines yet leaving his mouth. The blonde watches him shake and spill onto his stomach, the two words he mumbles almost amazed, "Holy fuck."

George tightens his legs around him and whines, "Dream, please." And that's all it takes for the other to remember his previous pace, speeding up to press into his tight heat. It doesn't even take long, not with the slight shiver already running through him, Dream pressing impossibly deep into him and falling over the edge. He circles his hips as he does, grip bruising on George's fingers as his orgasm hits him in harsh waves.

Again, he lingers a bit too long, and George can't help but think he might like an extra touch of overstimulation. The other pulls away completely, limbs almost limp as he lays at his side. George does indeed feel used, in a way he's not particularly sure is good. He's saved from his impending crisis by a tug into warm arms, allowing him the chance to tuck his head under Dream's chin. The fingers brushing over his shoulder are sweet, "You okay, baby?"

The former conflict about sex with Dream and a friends with benefits thing are hushed completely

by the name. No sex without feelings involved, he'd said. He lets the simple pet name convince him that there *are* feelings involved, he's even being held after. He can't believe they just had sex, shifting to hum against the other's adam's apple endearingly, "Yeah."

They take a shower together after, Dream helping him stand on his legs that feel like jelly, gentle hands taking care of him. He tries his best to shake himself out of his drowsiness to appear grateful, he thinks that Dream understands anyway. He always does.



## Chapter 19

### Chapter Notes

Finally I've finished this chapter, I've been slacking so bad. Anxiety sickness has been kicking my ass (birthday fun)

Anyway, enjoy, it was a difficult write once again

It's only later that George's head is clear enough to realize that they never kissed once, early in the morning when he wakes up from nervousness about the stream. The anxiety of the stream gives him a stomach ache, not helped by the warm body against his back. Why hadn't they kissed? He doesn't quite understand why not, what made it a bigger deal than them having sex?

George manages to wiggle his way out from under the heavy arm draped safely around his waist, feeling off. It's bad to have another mini-crisis before the stream, he's just gonna make the stress of it worse. Instead, he heads downstairs to down a glass of water and watch a movie or something to distract himself.

Karl's sitting hunched over at the kitchen island, eating a bowl of cereal, the blue eyes that turn to him reveal that they're suffering from the same thing. George dips his head and smiles a little, deciding to make his own bowl. But his stomach twists up and as he reaches for the box of cereal, it simply slips loose. It's practically just him blurting it out into the silence, "I had sex with Dream."

Karl freezes with his spoon halfway to his mouth, eyes wide at his words. Then it clatters down into his bowl, "You *what?*"

George repeats quieter, "I had sex with Dream."

"Oh." A crease appears between his friend's eyebrows, he asks, "You okay?"

"I-" He rubs a hand over his face and then admits, "Yes but no. He didn't kiss me once the whole time, I don't know what I did wrong that made him-"

"Have you talked to him yet?" He picks back up his spoon and George glares at him. He shrugs, "Sap tells me things."

George doesn't even care about the drama being shared, Karl *is* Sapnap's partner after all. He places his palms against the cool smooth counter and makes a noise of frustration, "I tried, it's not that I haven't made an effort. He just always looks at me in this *way*, like he's begging me to leave it unspoken."

"Why do you think that is?"

George turns to continue making a bowl of cereal for himself, shrugging, "Maybe he thinks I'll leave? Or that I don't feel the same way?" He huffs, "He's probably scared, but I'm scared too."

"You've got to talk to him, you know." Karl points out caringly.

“Cheap words coming from how you and Sap got together.” He feels guilty for how he knows the words sting, immediately wincing and saying a softer, “Sorry, I’m just.. whatever.”

Karl’s arms wrap around his shoulders from behind, hugging him close, “I know. Not everything always works out, we got lucky. Dream is, well, Dream. He’s not the most sensible when he’s anxious.”

“I’m anxious too,” George counters stubbornly, leaning back in a hold that he never has to worry about meaning more, “Why does everything fall on me?”

“Why does it all fall on him though?” The words hurt his vulnerable state, he hates being called out on his shit. It’s needed though, he’s also grateful. Another squeeze, “You two will work all these feelings out, you know he wouldn’t abandon you. Just talk, okay? It’s his problem at that point if he doesn’t listen.”

George pats the forearm of the arm around him, muttering, “How did you get so wise?”

“I’m not. I’m winging this relationship thing, honestly.” He’s released and Karl sits back in his stool, tone turning more lighthearted, “And I managed to snag a great guy, right? So you gotta give me *some* credit.”

George makes a relenting noise at that, not able to deny that Sapnap is a good person despite their not-caring-but-caring thing. They’re brothers, close for a reason, no matter how much they can’t stand each other sometimes. They end up starting a show, comfortable under blankets until George can’t take it anymore. Karl cheers when he stands and he rolls his eyes as he goes upstairs.

The bedroom is draped in smooth morning light, an angel in bed, blankets fallen down to reveal bare skin and a marked neck. George’s resolve almost crumbles, he’s quiet when he closes the door behind himself, making his way over. He slides his cold feet under the warm blankets, Dream stirring at the movement. Then he’s wrapped up in a sleepy arm, face pressing into his hair, Dream murmuring, “Missed you.”

He scoffs, rubbing a hand over his bicep, a bit nervous. He can’t help but feel the possibility that this is his last time being held by the other like this. George pulls away a little to cradle the other’s jaw in his hand, admiring his sleepy gaze, nerves nearly suffocating him. He gets a little smile, all dopey and in love.

He’s asked, “What’s got you so worked up, baby?”

“Can we talk?” The words come out so meek because he’s getting that damn look pleading for him not to ruin everything. He needs to, needs to ruin it for his own sanity and clarification. He’s given a little nod but he doesn’t miss the way the other’s smile drops a fraction. George keeps his voice small, “Why didn’t you kiss me?”

“You’re gonna interrogate me when I just woke up?” It’s a weak attempt at a joke. George remains silent and waiting, Dream sighs and admits, “I don’t know, George.”

“Did I..” Insecurity falls into his voice, “Did I do something wrong?”

“No. No, you know you could never do anything wrong.” Dream’s arm slides away and he lays on his back, eyes training to the ceiling instead. He appears to ponder it and then he says, “I think talking is bad for us. Because I won’t like what you have to say and you won’t like what I have to say.”

“Not talking is bad for *me*.” George asserts, not meaning for it to come off as cold as it does, he

winces, "I'm kinda going crazy here, Dream."

"Honestly? I'm scared and I don't want you to go," Eyes turn to him and his voice goes gentler, "But I'm not sure what I'm capable of giving you."

"I won't go, I'll never go." George vows firmly. Then he questions, "Why are you unsure?"

"I don't know *George*," Dream sits up and frustration leaks into his voice, "Maybe I've just been abandoned by most people I've cared about, been cheated on and unwanted and-"

"Hey." George rubs a careful hand over his tense shoulder, "Don't freak out on me again. Please. Let's talk it through, I won't get upset with you, no matter what you feel."

Dream eases back into laying down, taking a small breath, "You sure?"

The brunette wraps him up in a firm hug, just to comfort him and nothing more, "Yes, I promise." He strokes a soothing hand through blonde hair, pressing their temples together, "And those people were assholes, okay? People leaving you is not your fault. Them not wanting you is *not* your fault."

His heart squeezes painfully when a wet face presses against his shoulder, hands landing on his back to pull him close. They hold each other just for a few moments, under the shelter of morning light, in their bed. Then Dream pulls away, wiping away the wet streaks on his face and laying back again, voice shaky, "I'm sorry you have to deal with me."

"You know I love you, don't you dare apologize." George uses all his self-control to keep his hands to himself and not comfort the other more, "Now talk to me."

"I.." Dream doesn't even seem to know where to begin, gaze back on tracing the ceiling, "You're a very important person in my life. And everyone I've gotten close to, I always seem to screw them up. It feels like you and Sap are.. Miracles? Outliers? And that's scary."

George doesn't speak, waiting for him to continue, watching emotions flit over his face.

"I guess," Dream looks to him, shrugging one shoulder weakly, "I'm waiting to fuck things up. And things are good now, it's all steady and *safe*. And my- Well, *any* shift really is just going to throw me off balance and I'm going to ruin you."

"Change is scary," George agrees, "It scares me too. But think about how many changes we've gone through together. It's always worked out, hasn't it?"

"It's different," Dream turns his head to peer through the window, turning his face away, "You know it's different."

The brunette grabs his hand and squeezes, not getting a squeeze in return, "Dream. You don't ruin anyone. People hurt each other, that's true, but now you've got a group of wonderful people who support you. Trust in us all a little more, we all trust that you do your best. It's okay if you fumble sometimes, as long as you keep going."

"I'm not ready." Dream's eyes are glossy when they land on him again, voice the smallest that George has ever heard it, "I'm not *ready* to trust you that way. As my friend, yes. But with my heart?"

"That's okay." George furrows his eyebrows, "I don't like whoever told you that it's not. You don't have to be ready, not now or ever. That's *okay*, you're my best friend."

“You say that, then you go back to London the first chance you get and you leave me here all-”

“No.” George cuts, frown joining his furrowed eyebrows, “The next time I plan on going to London is with you by my side. I don’t want a life if it’s not with you, in any way you’ll have me.”

“You really mean that?”

“Yes,” George squeezes his hand again, “You’re stuck with me for life.”

“What if..” Dream rubs his thumb over his delicate knuckles, “What if I screw things up so bad that you change your mind?”

“Trust me,” is all that George can give as an answer to that. “Speaking as one of your best friends, I think that’d be pretty difficult to do. Or I could just have Sapnap kick your ass.”

Dream’s lips quirk up at the last comment. He gives him that squeeze back finally, asking, “For life?”

“Any way you’ll have me,” George confirms surely.

“Can I still hold you? Even as friends?” He gets a nod, arms instantly snaking around his waist, “And you’ll still sleep in here? Don’t think I could sleep without you.”

George hums in agreement to all those things, pressing his face into the other’s chest, “Course, Dream. Anything you want.”

“You’ll still let me meet your mom?” It’s spoken a bit more unsurely.

“I already said that I would, idiot. I think you deserve to finally meet her.” George trails a loving touch through his hair, “She’s been asking about you anyway.”

“I thought,” Dream seems to taste the words on his tongue before he lets him hit the air, “I thought you’d be mad at me. I basically just rejected you and you’re.. fine?”

George shakes his head in fake disapproval, “And I thought you knew me. Of course I’m not mad at you for being unsure or scared, what good would that even do? You feel what you feel and you need what you need, we’ll work to make you feel better. As friends. That’s okay with me.”

“That’s.. strangely selfless of you. Are you sure you’re George? Who are you?” Dream’s smile tilts up the last words.

George laughs against his chest, “Shut the fuck up, you idiot. You act like you wouldn’t do the exact same thing if it were switched.”

Dream smooths down his hair, “I think- *I want* to continue as we were. If that’s okay. It’s just going to take me a bit to be ready for the official shit, but eventually.. Eventually, I think we could work out.”

“Whatever you want,” George tilts his head up to place a small kiss on a bruised neck, “You’re still kind of an asshole for fucking me and not kissing me once though.”

The blonde scoffs, dragging his face up so they can look at each other, thumb pressing onto the corner of his lips. Green eyes drag all over his face, tender words, “I wanted to save our first. Until it means more, don’t think that I didn’t seriously consider it. I want to give you all of myself with it, I wanna be ready.”

George smiles and a weight is lifted off his chest, joking, “Wow, you’re totally in love with me.”

A roll of eyes and he’s being turned around, pulled back against the other’s chest, he barely catches the words in the crook of his neck, “It’s the pretty privilege.”

George tangles their fingers together and presses the warmth of Dream’s hand to his chest. Fingers rub over his knuckles again in response and he says gently, “No more sex though, okay?”

“No?” He can hear Dream’s grin in the word and he scoffs out a laugh.

He’s tugged closer and he murmurs, feeling the other’s smile against his skin, “Shut up.”

“I know, I know. I understand.” Dream says more seriously. Then his hand leaves to brush over his side caringly, “Speaking of which, you doing okay? Wouldn’t want you to be sore during the stream.”

George turns, knocking his shoulder back against the other’s chest, smiling, “Something about the way you said that makes me think you *do* want me to be sore during the stream.”

Dream chuckles, not denying that fact, fingers pressing into his hip where a bruise left by his teeth lies, “I’m serious, you’re okay?”

“Yeah.” The brunette pushes himself away to sit up, looking down at the angel he shares a bed with. He brushes his hair off his forehead, looking over freckles, and requests, “Come make me breakfast?”

Dream lets out a long sigh as if it bothers him, when they both know it doesn’t. He gets up and stretches, pulling on a loose shirt. George observes his sleepy state, processing quietly all of the interaction they had. When in front of the door, he’s stopped with a quiet, “George?”

He turns, blinking up at the other, “Yes?”

Dream pushes his hair behind his ear with gentle fingers, smiling small and fond, “We’re okay, right?”

“Of course.”

“You’re not upset?” And it seems like the extra reassurance is needed, eyes scanning his expression intently.

“No, I’m not upset. Promise.” All George does is soften, his own little smile pulling up his lips, “Now c’mon, idiot, I’m hungry.”

Karl’s eyes jump between them when they come downstairs. Then they stop on George, looking for any information at all. He provides none, Dream yawning and saying, “Wow, you’re up early. I’m gonna make breakfast, want some?”

Karl shakes his head, eyes turning back to the tv, “No, I already ate.”

George sits up on the counter, as routine, and feels nervousness about being on camera send tingles through his body. It’s not that he’s not used to it, it’s just that he’s not used to his whole body being on camera. And with three other people in the kitchen with him, anything can go wrong.

Plus more viewers than usual, all seeing him in an outfit that he’s not used to being in. Maybe his expression gives him away or maybe it’s the fact that he’s not swinging his legs happily about

being served breakfast like usual. Dream usually would wedge his hips between his legs and press kisses to his face but their newfound sense of communication puts a gap between them.

Instead, he's offered a little worried look, one that tells him that he's allowed to rant if it'll make him feel better. It's the promise of reassurance for his anxiety. Fuck, George loves him more than all the stars in the sky. He traces the relaxed slope of shoulders as he's turned away, relieved that their friendship survived their talk.

A small part of himself is disappointed that he wasn't swept into strong arms and kissed senseless. But the greater part of himself is glad that Dream had talked honestly about it, that he was trusted to know something as delicate as the other's fears. He plays through their talk again.

So Dream has feelings for him too, which was something he already knew kinda, and is simply scared of them being too much. George knows he has a big place in the other's heart, he knows that he's particularly special. He can understand the other's fear of scaring him off, the other's fear of giving too much and George fumbling with his already damaged heart.

Which usually would be George's fear as well, perhaps in a different way, but his worries about them not working are soothed by it being *Dream* of all people. The one who looks at him like he's aware that he takes up a large part of his heart in return. The one that cradles him like he's the entire heavens, moon, and milky way.

And now they're.. friends. Certainly friends, with a wall called time stopping him from crossing the line. But, despite this development, George can't help but feel all warm and cozy. Just from the fact that he even has a chance. It's okay, they're okay. He's honestly relieved, picking at the hem at the bottom of his shirt as he thinks it all through.

Dream hums, "George," He blinks, looking up to see furrowed eyebrows, being asked, "You okay?"

"Nervous about the stream, honestly."

"Which part?" Dream starts making their plates, turned away again.

"I dunno. Being on camera, the outfit, fucking up the recipe."

"You'll do fine. You look cute in those clothes," The grin that Dream turns to give him is smug, "At least you know I think so."

George's cheeks burn and he just rolls his eyes, ducking his head so the other can't catch it. He won't give him the satisfaction, not when Karl's definitely within hearing distance. Instead he leans forward, tracing the kitchen tile with his eyes, swinging his legs, "When are Sap and Q getting up?"

"They're so lazy, probably later," Dream's voice is back to lighthearted, smile still audible.

The blonde is within reach and George kicks him in the thigh, "Shut up, you only woke up because I went in the room."

"Mean," A hand presses on his knee to keep his leg still, "I only woke up to make you breakfast, actually."

George actually feels kind of bad then, "You didn't have to."

"Had to please my trophy wife."

“Gross.”

“Not you,” A laugh bubbles up in the other’s chest, “Patches, obviously.”

“Yet,” George aims another kick at him and is stopped with a firm hand, “She still likes me more.”

“You’re so dumb,” Dream’s warm palm rubs over his bare knee before it’s gone, along with his smile as he turns away again. Apparently the other was wrong because Sapnap comes out of his room right when a plate of food is being pressed into George’s hands. Dream smiles, turning already to make more eggs and bacon for him, humming, “Good morning.”

Sapnap leans over the back of the couch to hug his boyfriend, pressing a kiss to his cheek and mumbling something that George can’t hear. He’s not sure he wants to hear anyway, based on the bashful slap that’s delivered to the younger’s arm. Then Sapnap straightens up, turning to the duo in the kitchen and wrinkling his nose instantly, “I thought we said no visible marks.”

Dream ducks his head in embarrassment at that, one hand still busy using the spatula to move around the cooking eggs and the other rubbing over the side of his neck. He sounds like he’s just been lectured, “I know. But I’m not going to be on camera so it doesn’t matter.”

George swings his legs and smiles, accidentally giving them away by adding, “And I don’t have any, so it’s fine.”

Sapnap pauses, eyes jumping between the two of them, face blank. It’s not like it could’ve been anyone but George anyway, their best friend not knowing how to respond to that anyway. Then he makes a disgusted face for a second before asking, “So you guys talked?”

Dream says, “Yes, actually,” at the same time that George says, “A bit.”

Another face from their friend and he asks, “About?”

“None of your business,” George says firmly, shutting down the chances of Dream having to talk about it again so soon. Especially over something casual like breakfast, it feels like a conversation that needs privacy. That’s confirmed by the little grateful look he’s given, Sapnap going quiet for a second.

He seems to deem that they’re fine, shrugging, taking the plate he’s handed. That’s when Quackity appears, stretching, instantly sidling up on the counter against George’s side to annoy him. He scoffs when his elbow is bumped, making him nearly miss his mouth with his fork. He’s simply nudged again, “Excited for the stream?”

“Sure,” George answers with his mouth full, which successfully results in him getting no more questions.

Dream helps him get his outfit perfect, asking for a spin multiple times with a little motion of his hand. In a way, it’s new and refreshing to be simply *looked at*. He’d gotten his shirt tucked in by the other again, so gentle and caring, the fabric being pulled at and manipulated until Dream deems it correct.

It feels like the most domestic interaction they’ve had for a while, now that everything is laid out on the table. There’s no uncertainty and there’s no hesitating at their embrace before he heads to the kitchen, hands running over the small of his back tenderly. George gives another spin, feeling exposed with the pinch at his waist that exposes how slim his frame really is, asking again that he looks fine.

He's simply given an amused smile, there's a joke in Dream's eyes there that he doesn't care to share, being urged to leave for the kitchen finally. With the door open, George pauses and turns, pointing to his own chest, "I can get this shirt dirty?"

It'd seem too late of a thing to really ask, already dressed and ready. Dream steps forward to tug at a part of the shirt at his waist, adjusting, before he messes with the way his hair falls over his forehead. A kiss, just a small one, is pressed between his eyebrows, "Duh, idiot."

George giggles at the other's crooked grin before leaving. The first comment he gets from Sapnap, who maybe dressed in a slightly cleaner hoodie than usual, delivered with a nod of his head is, "Fancy."

Quackity slings an arm around his shoulder, probably messing up his hair in the process, nearly shouting in his ear, "Ready Gogy?"

George sighs, pretending to be annoyed, laugh still slipping through, "I suppose."



## Epilogue

George thinks he might actually throw up, the warm embrace of home latching onto his being in a way that feels unfamiliar. Not home, London. London with Dream, whose cheeks are pink from experiencing true cold for practically the first time. But with the beanie that George had worriedly secured over blonde waves, he looks happy as if it's every major holiday all on this exact day.

Or maybe he's just relieved to finally be off the plane, probably tired out from clinging onto George's hand fearfully. But there's a special shine in his eyes as he sees London for the first time, even if they've just left a crowded airport full of irritated people. And George? Well, George can only dwell on the fact that he loves him.

Not much else as he allows Dream a moment to take it all in before he calls a taxi. He twists his fingers together with cold ones, canines flashing as the other's smile turns to him, Dream remarking, "It's freezing."

George hums, looking to the sky, "Might snow."

The blonde's eyes widen in excitement, "Really?"

"Mhm," He brushes his hand over the other's cheek, taking notice of the ever-growing pinkness of his skin, "Though I dunno if you can handle it, Florida boy. Should get you inside so you don't get sick."

When they finally manage to snag a taxi, Dream wrinkles his nose at the side the driver's seat is on but doesn't comment. It's warm inside with the heater and George is relieved for the other as he gives the driver the address. Their hands are still wound together and he's glad that there's no comment on it. They sit close with their sides pressed together, Dream's leg bouncing restlessly.

He's nervous, George knows it with the way he's gnawing on his lips. The brunette watches the coral skin be dragged between ivory teeth before he stops the movement of his leg, smoothing his hand over the material of his jeans stretched over his knee. His voice is quiet, "Relax. She'll love you."

"What does-" Dream is still working his lip between his teeth, trying again quieter, "What does she even know about me?"

"That I love you. And you make me happy." Their eyes meet and George smiles tenderly, "Why was revealing your face to millions less nerve-racking to you than meeting my mom?"

"Because what if I fuck up?"

The older man shakes his head and squeezes his hand, "You're literally perfect. If anything, *I'm* the one that she's going to embarrass."

"I'll be sure to ask to see all the baby pictures," Dream chuckles mischievously.

George shrugs, "Your mom has already shown me all of yours anyway."

"No she hasn't," The other states in horror.

"She hasn't," He relents, his own laugh bubbling up at his friend's expression. Then he points threateningly and tries to school his expression into something serious, "But if you ask to see baby

pictures, I swear to god I'm texting your mother."

"She always takes your side, it's not fair," Dream complains back.

They both giggle and George is glad to see the tension in the other's body fade a little. For the rest of the drive, he simply rests his head on Dream's shoulder in a way he hopes is comforting, a thumb rubbing over his knuckles in response.

His mother lives in a little apartment all alone, having moved further into the city after all her children had left home. She always spoke about appreciating the presence of other people, of separate lives passing you on the street, and being grateful for the ones you've managed to fall into. On phone calls, she usually answers while on the balcony people-watching, telling him about stories she's thought of for strangers.

George's heart squeezes painfully with how much he's missed her, missed her random lectures about being grateful for the friends he has. He is, striding up the walkway to her doorstep with Dream attached to his hand and their shared luggage being rolled behind them, he really is grateful. It hits him and he feels like he startles a nervous Dream when he turns and blurts, "I'm thankful that you're here."

Dream grins so big that his smile is more crooked than usual, skin pink from the cold again already, "I know, George."

"I love you," He says and it feels like less of a spontaneous statement, slowing to a stop.

His friend dips down and presses a kiss into the hair hanging over his forehead, "I know."

"Sorry," George smiles shyly, "I'm just having a moment."

"I know," A roll of eyes this time. Then Dream shifts on his feet, "But can you hurry up because I feel like I'm going to combust from nerves."

"Right." He says and adds, "Gotta get you inside, it's too cold out."

"I mean, *I'm fine*," Dream tugs at him to finish walking the last half of the walkway, "I won't die from being a little cold."

"Maybe I should've taken Sappnap instead," He jokes, grinning as he lifts his hand to knock.

"Please," Dream rolls his eyes again, leaning on the doorframe but keeping their fingers tangled loosely, "He would just be complaining the whole time."

George knocks twice solidly, tugging the other's beanie further over his ear, muttering, "You look good right now."

"Now?" The blonde's hand rises to brush fingers over the warm moved material, the action distant, "Do I?"

A hum and a firm nod are all he gets, getting a tender look in response. He can't dwell on it any more than that though, gaze turning toward the door at the sound of the latching being unhooked. His mother looks absolutely giddy when she opens the door, smiling already, and George pretends to complain, "*Finally*, you're making us freeze out here."

Her arms secure themselves tightly around his shoulders and he releases his friend's hand finally to hold her back. Their cheeks are smushed together and the first thing she says to him back is,

“Didn’t know Florida made you into such a big baby.”

He laughs, squeezing her tighter, “Hi, mom.”

She pulls away to pat his cheek, smile still wide, “Hello, hello, you look very tired.”

“Dream doesn’t like planes,” He offers as an explanation. Then he twists his fingers back together with the man in question, seeing his anxious eyes darting between the two of them, tugging him to his side, “Speaking of which, mom, meet Dream. Or.. Clay.”

Dream laughs lightly, waving his real name off, “Dream is fine.”

She squints up at him and George pleads with her in his mind to be nice about it. He doesn’t think his poor friend would survive any teasing. Alas, success, she smiles brighter, “Wow, you’re a lot taller than I imagined.”

And then she embraces him in the same way she’d hugged George, like another one of her own. All George can do is breathe a silent sigh of relief, almost wanting to laugh at the stunned look that crosses the blonde’s face. His mother has her face turned toward him, obviously not tall enough to squish their cheeks together, and she mouths to her son, *‘holy fuck’*.

His laugh escapes then and his head spins over the fact that it’s gone smoothly. He grasps their nearly forgotten suitcase with his free hand and urges, “Okay, okay, mom. Let him breathe a little, you’re embarrassing me.”

Dream seems to be at a total loss of words and George’s mother seems to notice how cold he really looks, releasing him and gesturing for them to come inside, “You two truly must be freezing.”

His mom’s apartment is familiarly cluttered, Dream looks around in wonder at all the books and pictures. Finally, he gets more words out, stating, “You write.”

She smiles, leading them to the kitchen, “George, have you told him nothing at all? I’m a published author, honey.”

“Author?” And she points to the bottom of a shelf as they pass, with hardback covers that have her name in shiny gold on them. He studies them, wondering, “What genre?”

“Sci-fi,” She wiggles her fingers as she says it, giggle slipping out. Then she continues, “Sorry that the place is a mess, things always find new homes when I’m writing something new.”

George burns a bit with embarrassment over his withholding of information now, settling on a stool at the counter and admitting, “I really haven’t told him anything at all.”

“Am I really that embarrassing?” She sways mindlessly with the tune in her head, something she’s always done, beginning to make them tea to warm them up.

Dream releases George’s hand to go look at pictures on the walls, curiosity shining in his gaze. When he’s turned away, looking at a picture that’s probably of George as a child, his mother mouths again to him, *‘handsome’*.

Which, yeah, Dream is handsome. But the shine in her eyes tells him all he needs to know, that she recognizes them as friends on uncertain ground. But it is certain, he tries to tell her back silently, so don’t push our boundaries.

He’s been so good about it, respecting the other’s wish to just be friends until he’s ready for more.

And it's been a difficult past few months, with him being shut out many times, with Dream locking himself in his room for days and only letting him in to sleep. But things are good, he's happy. He thinks they both are.

"George?" A finger is lifted to nearly touch the glass of a picture frame, "When was this?"

He rises from his stool, feeling his mother's gaze pressing on his back, leaning in to look at the picture too. He smiles, seeing a picture with him and his sisters standing reluctantly for the image to be taken, "My first day of high school."

"Your sisters?" He asks, eyes lifting to capture his own, both of them unmoving.

They look at each other for a long moment and then George swallows dryly, blinking and answering quietly, "Yeah."

Dream's voice goes quiet too, just for his ears, "I like your mom. She's so.. you."

"I'd argue that I'm more *her*," He smiles. They're standing close, simply looking at each other again. He wraps his fingers tight around the other's sleeve, over his bicep to press his thumb against the muscle there, voice low, "Told you she'd like you."

"How do you know?" Dream hums, corners of his mouth lifting in satisfaction of that information anyway.

"I can just tell," He shrugs as if his mother didn't compliment his appearance silently twice. That's information that he'll tell his friend later, he likes this domestic humble Dream better than the one he'll see once he feeds his ego.

"Okay, you two, tea is ready," Which is his mom's way of saying *quit talking about me*. He smiles, leading the way as they both sit at the counter. Dream warms his probably still numb fingers on the cup, George's mother leaning on the counter and asking, "So, you don't like flying?"

A shake of his head and the older is relieved to see his nerves disappearing slowly. He answers, moving his knee to press against George's comfortably, "I'm not good with heights."

"Something we have in common," She brightens.

George cuts in, "You literally spend all your time up on your balcony."

"Okay, grumpy. I'm bad with *extreme* heights," She smiles, Dream chuckling at her words. She turns her head at the sound and offers, "If he gets on my nerves too bad, I've got some baby pictures to show you."

"No," George pleads, "No baby pictures."

She just laughs and sends a wink to Dream that promises that she'll bring them out later. The blonde smiles, catches one glimpse of George's face, and trains the expression down at his cup, "I'm being blackmailed, unfortunately."

"Oh?"

George explains, "I said I'd complain to his mother."

"Tattletale," She accuses. Then she tells Dream, "You're in London, what can she even do?"

"Send *my* baby pictures, which I'm sure are more embarrassing."

George hums in agreement, trying a sip of his tea to see if it's still too hot. His sure expression slips away at the stern look his mother gives him and he feels like he's been scolded, "You're really not going to let him? How many times do you think he'll even visit London, you're--"

Dream speaks up, "It's okay, really. I don't want to make George uncomfortable."

And George nearly melts at those words, eyes moving to his face to see his gentle expression. Fuck, George is a loser and totally in love, he sighs, "You can if you want."

"Really?"

He sighs again, cradling the soft curve of his face with his own gaze, "Yeah. If you want."

Dream smiles at him in a way that doesn't feel caused by his victory, in a way that makes George feel like he wishes to twist their fingers together and sit closer. He doesn't, his mom is still watching. She stands up straight again excitedly, "Yes! I'll get them now."

George wraps his hand around his friend's elbow, tugging as she makes her way upstairs, "Let's move to the couch."

"I love you," is the response he gets. It's just in one breath, light, absolutely stunned in a way.

He smiles, sure of himself when he says, "I know."

Then Dream lets him drag him to the couch, their delicate glass cups of cooling tea still in their palms. They're set on the low table, in front of the sofa that's a nice green color. It's cozy, George always feels so comfortable sitting here surrounded by all the clutter. It's even better sitting next to his favorite person.

Dream pulls off the beanie, carelessly trying to flatten his hair before he leaves it, tugging off his jacket now that he's used to the warm house. He has a hoodie on under, George's black merch one. He rolls up the sleeves and the brunette watches in amusement, commenting, "Getting comfortable?"

"Getting warmer," His friend explains, scooting closer to press their sides together. George is stuck between the armrest and him, resting his cheek against him as a hand lands on his knee. Dream's thumb rubs circles on the inside, he asks, "Are you sure it's okay?"

"My mom's right," He shrugs, "How many times are you really going to visit London? Might as well."

"George," He hums tenderly, "I'll visit London however many times you allow me to come with you."

"Even though you hate planes?"

"Even though I hate planes." He says confidently, as if he didn't cling to George's hand the entire time and allow him no time to sleep. He thinks he'd stay awake the whole flight every single time if it means that Dream can sit on his mother's sofa with him and talk to him this way.

He's pulled out of his pathetic dwelling on his lovesick heart by his mother's footsteps coming downstairs. She's got three photo albums in hand, looking satisfied by the embarrassment that she knows she's going to put her son through. He's fucked, absolutely fucked, judging by the way Dream lights up at the sight.

She sets two on the low table and hands the other to his friend, putting on her glasses as she settles on Dream's other side. It's a bit endearing the care in his touch as he opens it, the first two pages full of him as a baby. Instantly Dream coos, George biting on his knuckles to keep his smile hidden at the reaction.

Of course his mom starts going on tangents about him as a kid as they go through the album, George tuning out mostly and watching the two interact. The more the conversation, the more they figure each other out, and the more smoothly they get along. And George may be getting a bit sentimental about it, a lump forming in this throat, wanting to pull his mom to the side to tell her that he's glad she's getting along with the man he's in love with.

But he thinks she knows that already, he doesn't exactly bring anyone home. Definitely not anyone from across the world. And Dream is all gentle smiles, listening to anything she'll tell him, domestically with him. Together with him, in a way. A way his mom also seems to be figuring out, cheeks flushed from how damn happy she is. Happy her son is in love, perhaps.

She probably gets that impression from his silence and lack of protests, the way he rests his head against his friend's shoulder and brushes his fingers over his forearm. He's a big idiot for Dream, as Sapnap had told him when he'd spoken the words *in love* to him. He smiles when the other laughs, tender when their eyes meet.

Eventually his mother rises, disappearing for a second before returning to press a glass of wine into his hand, saying, "You're too quiet."

He laughs, clutching the glass carefully, "You're not even going to give Dream a glass?"

"Said wine is gross," She says, sitting again.

George blinks, apparently being more zoned out than he thought, taking a sip of the red wine. Dream smiles, teasing, "Yeah, George, did you not hear me?"

"I'm tired," He smiles back, offering over his glass, "Want a sip?"

Dream is careful not to drop it as they maneuver their hands so he can take it by the stem, George nervous about his clumsy nature. But there's no mishap, the other taking a little drink, wrinkling his nose in disgust. He laughs again, taking it back, taking another drink of his own. It's not that bad, really.

His mother is all smiles about their interaction, eyes jumping between them, picking up a new photo album, "Shall we go through this one?"

His friend nods and George turns away to peer out the window, seeing people out walking. Maybe he's gotten too used to the Florida heat but he can't imagine going on a walk in that cold, frowning out at the grey world. But he's warm here, a nose pressing suddenly behind his ear, sending shocks in remembrance of the last time that Dream had done it. It's been so long, he turns his head, and his friend murmurs, "What are you thinking about?"

"That I've adjusted too much to home, can't take the cold anymore," His hand rising instinctually to curl around the other's jaw, face pressing into his neck instead. He glances warily over and his mother is nowhere in sight, off somewhere else in the house.

Dream's large hand slides around the side of his neck, he speaks against his skin, "Home."

"Yeah, home." He grips loosely at the blonde curls at the other's nape, questioning, "Dream? What are you doing?"

It's been too long for him to be acting like this, too long for it to be normal anymore. As much as George wants to give in to his touch-starved state, he's not going to destroy all his friend's progress. Dream pulls away to cradle his face in one hand, admitting, "I dunno."

"Maybe you shouldn't," George offers, holding his wrist gently but not pulling it away.

Dream nods jerkily and trains his eyes downward, pulling his touch away, "You're probably right."

It still sounds off but they both brush it off when his mother returns. She reads them instantly, tilting her head, "You two must be exhausted. I set up the guest room for you whenever you're ready."

"Yeah," George nods, standing, "I am." He sets his glass on the counter, Dream trailing after him like a puppy. He makes his friend carry their suitcase up the stairs, requesting, "Mom, can we have some extra blankets?"

"Of course," She hums and veers off as they continue further down the hall.

The guest room is at the end, he flicks on the lights and lets Dream enter first. The luggage is practically dropped and he doesn't have even a breath of a moment before the blonde is on him. The door shakes in the frame with the harsh press of him, shutting loudly so that Dream can push him against it and latch his mouth onto his. And *holy fuck*, Dream is kissing the shit out of him, large hands framing his face.

George's head spins as he groans from the impact of his back against hard wood, then Dream seems to be trying to stick his tongue down his throat. It brushes his and then drags over the roof of his mouth, tasting the red liquor he'd been drinking. He moans again, fingers tangling in the other's hair, trying to pull him closer.

Their lips are slick against each other, they meet as if it's as it's meant to be. Dream rolls his hips against him, the two of them grabbing at each other like horny teenagers. And then a knock interrupts them, his mother saying unsurely through the door, "Your blankets?"

Dream pushes away, stumbling back to sit on the edge of the bed, breathless. Dark eyes are trained on him and George feels like his knees are weak, startling out of his state to turn and open the door. He really tries not to look like he just got kissed breathless, swollen lips probably giving him away, taking the stack of blankets. His voice is a bit hoarse, "Thanks."

"Goodnight. I'm going to be writing downstairs if you need anything," Her lips twitch knowingly.

He dies inside of embarrassment, saying quietly, "Okay, 'night."

He closes the door with his foot, turning to find Dream still watching him. They just blink at each other, processing. George's mind twists around words said months ago, about what their kissing means. And then Dream barks out a loud laugh, cheeks pink, standing to take the blankets from his arms and deposit them on the bed.

The second kiss is much more tender, a thumb brushing over his cheek as the blonde leans down so their mouths can meet easier. He makes a soft little noise, pressing close again, arms wrapping around his waist. Then George breaks the kiss, their noses still barely brushing, their eyes meeting, "What-"

And Dream shushes him, pressing a short kiss to his lips, tugging on him to press him against the bed. He parts his legs for the other's hips to settle and he's kissed firmly again, words being spoken against his mouth, "I want you."

“No, wait,” It’s hard to fight the fog falling over his mind, he starts trying to push himself up, “We can’t just not talk about-”

He’s shut up by Dream’s mouth, “George,” Another, “Can you please just be quiet for once and enjoy it?”

“I can’t, not if you’re going to freak out about it later, I know you.” He places a hand on his chest and pushes gently.

“You’re not listening to me,” His hand is grasped and pulled away, “George, *I want you.*”

He furrows his eyebrows, “I am-”

“What did I tell you? I wanted to be ready before I kissed you.”

George pauses and then brushes his hands over the other’s cheeks, voice quieting, “Why now of all moments?”

Dream kisses his palm, fond, “George, I just met your mom. Listened to stories about you that I didn’t know. *Flew to London* with you. I guess I realized today that I don’t want to waste any more time being scared of being in love with you.”

“You’re in love with me?”

“I’ve *been* in love with you. I fall more and more every fucking day. And it scares me but I want this with you, all of it with you.” The honest look on Dream’s face makes tears gather in George’s eyes, the blonde leaning to connect their lips smoothly, murmuring, “I want to spend my life with you.”

“Fuck,” George presses their foreheads together, wetness staining his cheeks, being held comfortingly. His voice wobbles, “You’re making me cry, you idiot.”

Dream chuckles, “Just tell me you love me too, that you still want me. Please.”

“You know I love you, of course I want you too.” He smiles, bright and happy despite the tears. He adds, “Any way you’ll have me, remember?”

Their lips meet, warm and tender, loving. They part, looking each other over before Dream kisses him deeper. He rolls his hips down, “Now I *want you* want you.”

“At my mom’s house, really?” George smiles despite his words, both of them giddy with their confessions.

“Let me make love to you, baby.”

And how could George say no to him when he says it like that? They stay wrapped up naked together afterward, between fresh sheets, after cleaning up. It’s a half-assed explanation of being lazy but they both just like feeling the other close. Hands smooth over his hips and he presses his face into the crook of Dream’s neck, fingers running through unruly blonde waves.

He’s safe, warm, taken care of and in hopeless love with his best friend. He presses a kiss to the first bit of skin he can reach, turning his head to glance tiredly at the moon and the dim stars. He’s greeted by snowflakes perching on the window frame, frost spreading over the glass, snow still falling. George’s hand stops its movement, “Dream, it’s snowing.”



All he gets in response is a hum against his shoulder in complaint of him stopping. He continues, watching the snow fall, cozy in their little bubble. Tomorrow, there's always tomorrow to force Dream to suit up in many layers to experience snow for maybe the first time. They have time, so much time together. He'll make it count, he vows.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!